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The Editors
CONTESTING
THE CONGRESS

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SEPTEMBER 26, 1980

EDUCATION ISSUE

10 commandments for teaching

BERNARD MURCHLAND

REFLECTIONS ON A
JESUIT UNIVERSITY

25 years later

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

**A PLANETARY BARGAIN? • THE DEATH OF
VLADIMIR SHELKOV • RICHARD McBRIEN'S
CATHOLICISM • FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S
SOUTH • RICHARD SENNETT'S AUTHORITY
• WILLIAM GOLDBERGER'S ANISM •**

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Correspondence

Minimal downside risk

Austin, Tex.

To the Editors: Ronald Reagan's economic platform may in fact be, as Professor DuBoff contends with such inner certainty ["The New Economic Mythology," July 4], grounded on a flawed theoretical base. The test of the Republican economic theory, as of any other, is in its ability to explain the present and predict the future. I suggest to Professor DuBoff that conservative theory does about as well—and as badly—as any other set of ideas his profession has produced. A bit more intellectual humility—particularly in light of the less-than-remarkable track record achieved by economics and economists—might be a useful ingredient in his thinking and writing.

The GOP's economic "mythology," at least, has the virtue of congruity with a general philosophy of decentralized decision-making coupled with individual accountability for one's actions. A businessman or corporate executive will not always make a better decision than will a government official (but then, of course, the businessman often is directly and personally affected by the decision, a wonderful incentive seldom available to the official). A group of individual decisions, each of narrower scope and lesser impact than the corresponding government policy action, has less potential for a net harmful effect. Granted, the spread of good works may be slowed somewhat (but compare the rates of scientific progress in the U.S. and the Soviet Union). The downside risk of progressive efforts is minimized. To quote the contemporary "Adam Smith," to win, first of all you must not lose.

In short, the Republicans may or may not be right in their specific ideas. The real appeal of their program lies in the philosophy that will guide their approach to governing: under most circumstances, an individual, aware of his context and of his responsibility, is the optimal judge of what is best for him. CHARLES TODD

Don't blame the Shah

Choctaw, Okla.

To the Editors: John Garvey's "Arrogance of Power" [June 6]. What an excellent title for an article that portrays precisely the arrogance which the author so righteously decries.

Mr. Garvey's characterization of the PBS broadcast of *Death of a Princess* as tasteless is a subjective opinion at best. He should visit the local execution squares in any major city within the kingdom on any Friday. The system does operate, and basically in the manner implied by the film. What Mr. Garvey apparently desires is a marathon twelve-hour documentary balancing the good and the bad. What Mr. Garvey misses is that the film was not intended to explain Islam to the Americans, but rather is intended to focus on a very tiny aspect of a very mysterious happening to a minor female member of the Saudi royal family. John Garvey should also note that the bureaucratic roadblocks depicted in the film were not atypical; just try to obtain a visa in the kingdom sometime.

Mr. Garvey's critique of the rescue attempt is understandable insofar as one understands the author's background and mind-set. The Garveys of the world made similar sounds about a gentleman named Thieu of Vietnam, i.e., we cannot support a corrupt, immoral regime, etc., . . . meanwhile of course the "liberation" goes on. Strange that after five years, regular NVA troops are still in "Ho Chi Minh" City, and, stranger still, where is the NLF, the Viet Cong, et al, who were going to lead the peoples once liberation became reality?

The same argument applied to the Shah won't wash. Let Garvey go to the boonies in Saudi, Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Oman, and sample the average life-span of the local male. Let him witness the typical Bedouin post-partum procedure in most of the Arab world. Let him check the infant mortality rate, the diet, the housing. . . . Mr. Reagan may not be as far off the mark as Mr. Garvey would like to think.

Let Mr. Garvey attend a lecture at an Arab university and hear the speaker decry Western vacuousness. "What

have they given us beside their technology," the speaker might say. What indeed, we might answer, but, before we answer let's check the speaker's "credentials." Did he obtain them in the U.K., the U.S., AUB, Western Germany? That the very technology he decries has discovered his oil, grown his food, built and delivered his jet airliners, his motorcars, his televisions, his communication satellites, his hospitals—and moreover, what *could* the West provide other than technology? They have Islam, royal families, tribal tradition . . . and more; just ask them. *Westernization* and Islam did clash in Iran. Hopefully, *modernization* and Islam will not meet the same fate in Saudi, but that distinction remains to be judged as effective.

Mr. Garvey overlooks what has occurred in Iran since the arrival of the Khomeini regime, or he chalks it up to a reaction against the Shah, while ignoring totally Iran's pre-Shah history. As one who has seen Islam up close, let me say that the bottom line is this: don't blame the Shah for trying to extricate his nation from a thirteenth century mind-set. Islam without technology peaked shortly after the Crusades, and future resurgences of Islam will of necessity be complemented by the critical need for modernization and education of those who will comprise the national infrastructure.

I will agree with Mr. Garvey on one point. Mr. Carter *should* have apologized: first, to the Shah for advising him to loosen control, and, second, to the Iranian people for casting them into the twilight zone created by Khomeini's totalitarian regime.

J. A. RONDEAU

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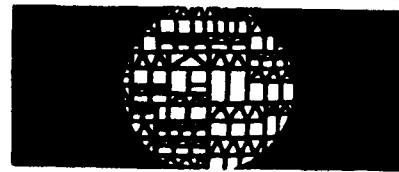
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THE OTHER CONTESTS

WILL JIMMY CARTER go down in defeat in November, and in the process take a good part of the Democratic ticket with him? Despite the president's recent rise in the polls, that is the question that is still haunting many Democratic senators and representatives.

Congressional Democrats are less worried now than they were as recently as August. At that time most officeholders were frustrated by their irrelevance to the nominating procedure. The reform of the primary process had left them with little of their former influence in the choice of a nominee they thought could win in November, and only a handful of those in Congress were even delegates to the Democratic convention. A Louis Harris poll which had always been very reliable showed that the voting public then preferred Republicans to Democrats for Congress by forty-seven to forty-three percent—the first time such a shift in public opinion had taken place since the Eisenhower years. In a situation where they felt they needed a strong head of the ticket, Democrats in Congress who were up for reelection feared that Carter would drag many of them down to defeat with him.

Thus it was that in the spring and early summer months many Republicans were increasingly optimistic about the electoral fight for control of Congress. The G.O.P. was starting out with a numerical advantage: of the thirty-four contests in the Senate, twenty-four are for seats now held by Democrats. Of these incumbents, half a dozen are liberals who were helped to win last time around by the G.O.P. scandals associated with Watergate and Richard Nixon; this time they have to run with a presidential incumbent of their own party whose coattails may prove to be leaden. No wonder that some months ago Senate majority leader Robert C. Byrd publicly admitted his fear that the election might turn him into the minority leader.

In the House, there are 435 contests scheduled; of these, 274 are for seats now held by Democrats. Nonetheless few Republican leaders predicted success in taking over the House in 1980. With 159 seats now in G.O.P. hands, Republican chances of achieving the 218 seats they would need for a majority are slim. But during the spring and summer Republican leaders did expect to gain fifteen to twenty seats this time and thus position themselves for a G.O.P. takeover in 1982.

Why were Republicans more optimistic about the Senate? In part, this was because representatives in the House are less conspicuous than senators, less identified with controversial national issues. That is one reason they are, contrary to many people's opinion, less vulnerable than their senatorial colleagues. The Senate is now divided between forty-one Republicans and fifty-nine Democrats. There are only seven Republicans up for reelection; most are considered safe, in marked contrast to their Democratic counterparts. It would not take a huge shift in electoral sentiment to shift the balance of power in the Senate. Since World War II, according to *Congressional Quarterly*, senators have had a casualty rate of thirty-two percent

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compared to nine percent for House members. This statistic, on top of the fact that two-thirds of the senators up for reelection this year are Democrats, made the Republican leadership a trifle cocky about their chances of winning a Senate majority as late as in August.

After the Democratic convention, a few Reagan gaffes, and Mr. Carter's subsequent rise in the polls, it became the turn of the Democrats to wax optimistic. Democratic leaders now express confidence that they will retain control of both House and Senate this fall, a control they have maintained for a quarter of a century, although probably with slimmer majorities than they now enjoy. Speaker of the House Thomas P. O'Neill expects a net loss of not more than ten to eighteen seats in the House, and majority leader Byrd has reversed himself on his former fearful predictions, now saying that it might even be possible that the Democrats would win additional Senate seats.

A hard-to-figure aspect to all this is the Anderson candidacy. On this score there is a conflict of interest between President Carter and Democratic candidates for the House and Senate. Carter fears Anderson will drain votes away from him, and he and his aides tried hard if vainly to bar the independent candidate from as many state ballots as possible. At this point Mr. Carter is refusing to enter the first television debate because of the presence of Mr. Anderson. But congressional candidates estimate that Anderson's candidacy may bring to the polls millions of moderate and liberal voters who might otherwise stay home in disgust; such voters, they calculate, would support Democratic House and Senate candidates rather than conservative Republican contenders. Indeed, some calculate that this factor alone might save eight Senate seats and as many as twenty-five House seats for the Democrats.

In any case, whatever the ultimate effect of the Anderson candidacy, the Democrats would be wise to run scared. For the first time since Herbert Hoover, they are going into the November race with the economic issues heavily weighted against them, and on election day normally Democratic voters may stay home by the thousands. Indeed, present poll predictions indicate that this year's turnout will no more than match that of 1976 when, at fifty-four percent, it was lower than it had been in the previous twenty-eight years. Democratic candidates are running with a presidential nominee considered by many even inside his own party to be inept and inefficient. Despite current Democratic optimism about the House and Senate contests, if Carter does run a poor race, he could still drag the entire ticket down, and this could set the stage for a Republican takeover of Congress, if not in 1980 then in 1982, with all that such a switch would mean for national policy — most immediately, perhaps, on the vital and highly vulnerable SALT II treaty.

COMING: David O'Brien analyzes the political paralysis of American Catholicism. Thomas Power tells why PD 59 opens a new era in nuclear strategy.

North-South relations

A PLANETARY BARGAIN?

UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DEVELOPMENT

A MAJOR UNITED NATIONS session met in New York in late August and early September to review the state of North-South relations. Officially known as the UN Special Session of the General Assembly on Economic Development the session had the task of formulating a strategy for the 1980s, the third development decade, and of launching a global round of talks on the most pressing North-South issues—energy, finance, commodities, and so on. In fact, the session became bogged down in the technicalities that have tended to characterize recent rich-poor negotiations. And yet underlying the discussions there was something of an awareness that change cannot long be delayed, because the existing North-South economic order is unsatisfactory for both sides.

Delegates had considerable difficulty in reaching agreement because they had different perceptions of what the main problems really are. Developing countries say that poverty in their countries is generally getting worse and that the world trading system does not help them. Further, that the rich ought to be prepared to share a little more of their affluence. Northern countries, especially the United States and Japan, see the North-South dialogue largely in terms of energy supplies and prices. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie put a great deal of emphasis on the importance of oil-producing countries' adopting "stable price and supply policies" and joining the consuming countries in working for rational global energy arrangements. The North was at the UN expecting changes from the OPEC group, and the developing countries were there expecting changes from the North. In theory a kind of planetary bargain could have been struck, in which OPEC agreed to hold prices reasonably steady if Western countries agreed to scale down barriers against Third World goods, give more aid, and reform the world monetary system.

This was precisely the argument of the Brandt Commission report on international development issues which was published earlier this year (*North-South: A Program for Survival*, MIT Press, \$4.95). The Commission was made up of eighteen distinguished statesmen from both North and South including four former prime ministers. At the end of two years of deliberations, they were unanimous in agreeing that a formula could be worked out that would serve mutual interests and thereby satisfy all sides.

The Brandt report pointed out that the present international economy is working badly for both North and South. The industrialized North has twenty-five million people out of work despite the fact that some of the goods it could produce are urgently needed in the South. If, said the Commissioners,

the North would increase aid and scale down trade barriers, the South would have more purchasing power to buy the goods of the North, thus helping to cut down unemployment in industrialized countries.

In such a deal, OPEC would agree to keep oil prices fairly steady or at least only increase them by predictable amounts. Furthermore a bargain of this kind would do a great deal to secure for the North the raw materials, copper and cobalt, for example, that are vital for industrial and strategic processes.

The Brandt report has been widely read in Europe, less so in North America. (Sales to date in Britain total 40,000; in the United States only 6,000.) The report has persuaded one powerful European country to change its mind about development. West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher told the special session that his government had revised its concept of development in the light of the Brandt report. Genscher said that the West should now admit that developing countries were right to claim that development efforts were useless, "unless the external conditions for development are created through the reform of the world economic structures." He went on to say that West Germany stood on the side of the non-aligned countries in their struggle for self-reliance.

But the Brandt report was not powerful enough to persuade every industrial country at the special session that the moment was right to make the all-important breakthrough in North-South relations and launch a planetary bargain. Developing countries asked for a firm commitment from rich countries that they would reach the UN aid target by 1984, transferring 0.7 percent of their national incomes to them by that date. Holland, Denmark, and the Scandinavian countries supported developing countries in their request. The United States and Britain strongly opposed any commitment to a firm date for reaching the target.

A strategy for the 1980s was formulated at the session, but it is capable of meaning anything or nothing. Northern countries have committed themselves to reducing or eliminating "existing restrictions on imports from developing countries." They also agree to "take steps" to reform the world monetary system. If the political will is there these reforms could be done quickly; if it is missing they are never likely to happen. There was also disagreement over the content of the global round of talks which should begin in January 1981. Again the talks, when they do begin, could lead anywhere or nowhere. A great deal hinges on whether the North is willing to give the issue sufficient priority.

It was for the purpose of injecting more political will into North-South relations that the Brandt Commission report suggested that a twenty-five-nation summit be held. This is likely to take place in January 1981 at Mexico City. This Mexico summit is a natural follow-up to the special session. It just might see a break with the old polarities that, as Pope John Paul II said in a message to the special session, must cease to dominate the North-South dialogue.

JOHN MADELEY
(John Madeley is an international development economist who contributes to the London Observer, the Guardian, Church Times and other publications.)

Human rights

VLADIMIR SHELKOV

ANOTHER SOVIET AFFRONT TO HELSINKI

ON AUGUST 1, 1975 the Soviet Union signed the Helsinki Accord on European Security and Cooperation. Together with the U.S. and thirty-three other countries it pledged, among other things, to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. In return for this promise the USSR received a document that affirmed its borders and legitimized the status quo in Europe. Soviet officials left Helsinki elated: they witnessed the culmination of twenty years of Soviet diplomatic efforts. In exchange the West received a basis for arguing that inquiries into human rights matters from abroad are not necessarily intervention in Soviet internal affairs.

Five years have now passed since Helsinki. Although it is no secret that the Soviet Union has made little effort to respect the provisions of the accord, Westerners remain only dimly aware of the severity of the continuing violations. Detailed reports on the exile of Russian physicist and Moscow dissident Andrei Sakharov to the city of Gorky have reached Western readers. The news media also focused considerable attention on the official campaign to rid Moscow of dissidents and other perceived trouble-makers before the start of the summer Olympics. But news of one of the most glaring Soviet violations of the spirit of Helsinki has not caught the Western public's notice.

In March 1979, a Soviet court in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, sentenced Vladimir Shelkov, a frail eighty-three-year-old man in poor health to five years of hard labor. Shelkov was subsequently deported to Tabaga, a Siberian labor camp in the autonomous republic of Yakutsk. Pastor Georgi Vins, a Baptist leader exiled to the U.S. in April 1979, served four years in that camp for his religious beliefs. He has described Tabaga as a camp of "death." Extreme cold, chronic hunger, backbreaking labor and medical neglect, according to Vins, ensure the



physical destruction of the inmates. In Shelkov's case, advanced age and ill health hastened the process. On January 27, 1980, at the age of eighty-four, he died.

Observers of these events must ask two questions. What crime could compel Soviet authorities to inflict certain death upon such an old man? Secondly, how could such a sentence be imposed under the Helsinki Agreement?

Vladimir Shelkov was the spiritual leader of the Church of True and Free Seventh Day Adventists, a group which rejects any state interference in its religious affairs as immoral. In March 1978 he was arrested in a violent crackdown on Adventist communities in several Soviet republics and held in pre-trial detention in a KGB prison for the next year. Shelkov's only "crime" was that he was an uncompromising religious believer, who tirelessly defended unjustly persecuted religious

believers and human rights activists. For this he was bitterly attacked in the official press and convicted of "slandering the state and infringing citizens' rights under the guise of religious activity." For steadfastly refusing to renounce his beliefs, Shelkov has been persecuted for most of his adult life; he has been a prisoner of conscience for twenty-five years, including fifty-five days spent on death row. Because authorities could not cause his moral death, they decided to destroy him physically.

Despite support from Amnesty International, the U.S. Congress, and private citizens, the protective spotlight of world attention was not sufficiently cast upon Shelkov. His persecution and death did not arouse a storm of Western indignation. Moreover, there were no vigorous appeals by foreign leaders in his defense.

WE ARE EXCEPTIONS

A TALK TO GRADUATING SENIORS

MICHAEL B. DOWNING

The following is excerpted from the Class Day talk given last May 28 at St. Joseph's High School, Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The speaker was Michael B. Downing, who graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College in June. Mr. Downing has also written for America, the Harvard Magazine, and the Berkshire Eagle. He is now teaching and traveling in England as a Harvard-Shrewsbury Fellow.

THIS IS NOT a position in which I often find myself. In fact, in less than a week I expect to find myself in a situation very much like your own; assembled with my friends, surrounded by teachers and relatives, listening to one speaker or another attempt to make sense of an experience of which he was not a part.

The major difference is that the speaker for my Class Day will be Walter Cronkite and the commencement address will be delivered by Cyrus Vance. Being no less than graduating seniors you will, by now, have guessed that I am neither Mr. Cronkite nor Mr. Vance. Believe me, I am more disappointed by that fact than you are. Naturally, then, a certain question arises: Why was I chosen as the Class Day speaker for you, the class of 1980?

Frankly, I am not sure. But I can venture a guess. As a 1976 graduate of St. Joseph's I can at least sympathize with your experience of the past four years. Many of you will enter colleges in the fall; I did that too—so in some small way I suppose I have seen your future—and yes, it works.

In fact, a casual observer might say that all of us here are

very much alike.

For example, have you ever noticed that the mailman occasionally delivers a sample of Folger's coffee or Crest toothpaste to your home? As residents of Pittsfield, we get these samples not because we are special but because Procter and Gamble believes that Pittsfield is a very average American city. So, perhaps we're all very average here. Like you, I fit into the middle-class column in *Time* magazine surveys. St. Joseph's is a typical, if small and Catholic, high school. In terms of religion, we're not a very diverse group.

Given these "facts," perhaps the most sensible thing for all of us allegedly average folks would be to set our sights low, dream small dreams, attempt to accomplish only those things that we know we're capable of—and thereby avoid disappointment. If we are statistically mediocre, we should act accordingly.

Wrong. On all counts.

First, and most obvious, Procter and Gamble notwithstanding, Pittsfield is not an average American city. We can dismiss this city and the surrounding area as the Pitts, but Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Edith Wharton—to name a few— anxiously made this their home. And if we have not availed ourselves of Tanglewood, Greylock, Jacob's Pillow, the theaters, Bash Bish Falls—then I suppose we deserve to be buried in samples of Biz detergent.

Having dismissed Procter and Gamble, I guess it is time to take on *Time* magazine and the whole cast of pollsters and statisticians who constantly remind us that we are the middle class. In purely relative terms the designation middle class is, of course, entirely inaccurate. More than one-third of the world's population is presently starving. They don't have enough to eat. We do. We enjoy one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. In Afghanistan—a small, eastern country that we may have the chance to tour in the near future—there is not a single sanitary water

In November representatives of thirty-five countries will meet in Madrid to review compliance with the Helsinki Agreement. Soviet officials will probably offer the West concessions in the field of human rights—increased Jewish emigration, more family reunification—if Western delegates agree not to “poison the atmosphere” of the conference by criticizing the Soviet record on human rights. Additionally, Soviet delegates will likely demand Western support for a post-Madrid European conference on disarmament.

Any Soviet concessions on human rights matters should be welcomed and encouraged. The Madrid conference should not degenerate into an anti-Soviet campaign. However, it is an appropriate occasion to send Soviet leaders a message: the calculated death of Vladimir Shelkov will not be forgotten, nor will the suffering of thousands of Soviet Christians, Bud-

dhists, and Muslims. Despite the promise of Helsinki, they continue to be deprived of higher education, threatened with fines, incarceration, confiscation of property and children, subjected to violent raids, rape, murder, denied their right to emigrate simply because of their beliefs. For these individuals, Shelkov remains a symbol of indestructible devotion to freedom of conscience. His death is an egregious affront to the spirit of Helsinki, and it illustrates with utter clarity how far Soviet authorities are prepared to go to destroy an individual of conscience when Western support is weak or conspicuously absent.

WALTER PARCHOMENKO

(Walter Parchomenko is a free-lance writer whose articles on Soviet-American relations have appeared in the Christian Science Monitor, Commonweal, America and other publications.)

supply.

So, happy graduation, and welcome to the world's aristocratic class.

In the sixteenth century, Sir Francis Bacon wrote that knowledge is power. We have helped America rewrite that phrase. Today, money is power. We have more money than most. Therefore . . .

When an old man stops you on some street and begs for change, remember—we have the power. When we complain about the price of gasoline and heating oil—non-renewable resources—will we also conserve? We don't have to, we have the power. There are thousands of Cuban refugees looking for work and homes in our country—but we have the power. Even here in Pittsfield, there is a United Way, a Catholic Overseas Relief Fund, a Salvation Army—a lot of people with a lot of good ideas and practical solutions; oh, but we have the power.

Well then, if we are not the products of an average city and we are not the middle class, what are we all doing sitting around in this typical high school auditorium?

Celebrating, I believe. And celebrating what? No, not a beginning. Despite the honorary title, I do not believe that this is your commencement. Besides, in two or four years, you will be told again that you are about to commence. As long as they keep telling us that we have just arrived at the beginning, it remains hard to understand why we should be doing anything in the meantime.

None of us here is only beginning. In a few days, you will have your diploma from a small Catholic high school. We are all well on our way.

I do not intend to catalogue the peculiar benefits that we enjoyed as students of St. Joseph's. To a great degree, the good and the bad memories that we have from the four years spent here are entirely self-made memories, self-taught lessons. But it is easy to overlook the objective qualities of the place. Yes, most Americans have a high school diploma; but most have been graduated from a public school

system that offered them far less opportunity. I don't think that I am overstating the case when I say that you will never again be in an environment in which the impulse to learn and grow as a community is so consistently and freely provided for you. On the basis of what we have learned and experienced here, we can expect and achieve far more than the average. We are the exceptions.

Despite the fact that I am willing to dismiss Procter and Gamble, *Time* magazine, and the ceremonious language of commencement, I am not willing to dismiss the church. As I already noted, in terms of religion, we are not a very diverse group.

Good for us. Our religion is the center of this community, a kind of adhesive between the individuals gathered here. That, too, is exceptional.

Whether or not we fully understand it, when we recite a creed together, we are acknowledging that faith in a very public way. It was easy to do that here. I think it is important to continue to do that; to say, out loud, I believe.

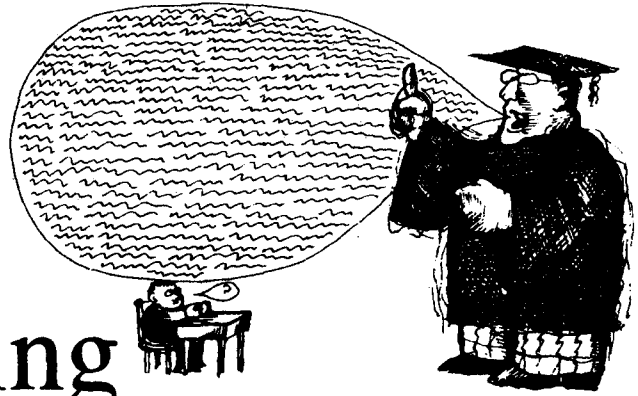
We have all heard, perhaps too many times, that our faith should be the center of our lives. It strikes me that the reason we hear it so often is that so many people believe it, and say so. Generations have said “I believe” for thousands of years. I don't think that they were fools to say that. Our grandparents believed so strongly that they willingly gave up their money—their power—to raise up churches where we could gather. I don't think that our grandparents were fools. Our parents chose for us an education that would revolve around our religion. I don't believe that it was a foolish decision. As we leave behind daily contact with friends and family and so many of the familiar pieces of our lives, I think it is we who would be fools to give up the exceptional center that binds us.

And, finally, only this—

Congratulations. There seems to be no need to wish you the best; it is what you have earned. Without exception.

MICHAEL B. DOWNING

Ten Commandments for teaching



BERNARD MURCHLAND

IT IS OFTEN CHARGED that college teaching is the only profession for which no training is necessary.

There is truth in the charge. Some of us may accidentally have gained some teaching experience along the way as teaching assistants or whatever. But on the whole we come in the green glory of our youth to our positions with little notion of what to do. It is not, therefore, surprising that we often do it badly. *Quis custodiet custodes*—who shall teach the teachers?

I cannot, of course, remedy this situation. My more modest aim is to offer some guidelines (commandments is perhaps too pretentious a word) distilled from my own teaching experience. Others may find them useful.

I. *Remember that teaching is an art.* It should in fact be regarded as one of the performing arts. Whatever else we teachers are, we are actors engaged in the ancient art of capturing and persuading an audience. It is an art that calls for rhetorical skills and metaphorical ingenuity beyond the ordinary. We must, therefore, like any actor rehearse and hone the talents necessary to our craft. One of the best philosophy teachers I ever had acted out each new thinker we took up in class, thus dramatizing their ideas. He was particularly good on the French. His interpretation of Descartes (a more dramatic thinker than is commonly supposed) was a classic. He was almost as good on Sartre. One day he played out a heated dialogue between the two. It was an unforgettable class.

It might not be a bad idea to give candidates for teaching positions the educational equivalent of a screen test. They might be tested for clarity and competence; for platform performance, ability to relate to and communicate with the young; for enthusiasm, posture, voice control, and other qualities we know to be desirable. Not the least problem with college teaching is lack of attention to such basic pedagogical requirements. All manner of mumbler and fumbler is allowed to take the podium. Innate talent naturally helps any actor. But

teachers are largely made not born. Ninety-nine percent of teaching is an acquired skill. It must be perfected like all art, rehearsed year in and year out, continually fed by the springs of the imagination. We are not exempt from the hard discipline that makes for excellence in any art.

However, I do not want to overemphasize the extrinsic aspects of the theatrical metaphor. It has a deeper meaning which every educator ought to attend to, for it is a fact that in the profoundest moral sense we are actors on life's stage. That is to say, we learn how to become human by engaging in a sustained series of rehearsals. Michael Oakeshott spoke to this point when he said that "a human life is composed of performances and each performance is a disclosure of a man's beliefs about himself and the world and an exploit in self-enactment." From this perception he draws the conclusion that education is learning how to imitate, as though in a ritual, those models of humanity that it is the liberal arts' chief responsibility to transmit. Education, says Oakeshott, is "learning to perform humanly." Teachers are performers in the sense that they stand to their students as mirrors of humanity—of a significant range of ideals, techniques, and accomplishments that the race has built up through history and judged good. It follows that they themselves should be well rehearsed and in some appreciable degree masters of the peculiarly human capacity for "self-enactment," an ability to give evidence before others of meanings acquired and choices made.

II. *Teach or perish.* Most of us perforce begin our teaching careers trained in the habits of the graduate schools. One of the worst of these is the deeply ingrained belief that publishing has some necessary bearing on what we do. It doesn't. The temptation is strong to consider colleges mere prep schools for graduate work. How good we feel when our students make it to the prestigious universities! But this is more a bias of faculty members than an intrinsic feature of the order of things.

We must make a distinction, and indeed a radical distinction, between colleges and graduate-professional schools. Graduate schools are research oriented and deal in specialized knowledge. A premium is put on new knowledge. Colleges are teaching institutions and deal for the most part in general and

BERNARD MURCHLAND is chairman of the philosophy department at Ohio Wesleyan University.

acquired knowledge. The purpose of a graduate school is to train professionals. The purpose of a college is to educate a moral personality or, to put it in the more modern idiom of Sidney Hook, someone fit for democratic living. Consequently, the practices of the research scholar are not for the most part appropriate at the undergraduate level. A major impediment to effective college teaching is an inability to adjust to the special requirements and demands of this quite different kind of activity. In reality, we tend to teach as though our students themselves were going to become practitioners in our discipline.

Let me qualify. I don't wish to prohibit those with a desire and a talent to publish from doing so. Nor do I claim that publishing has no beneficial effect on teaching. It might. Certainly we all have to keep up in our fields; and in some disciplines like the social sciences, publishing is sometimes a natural outcome of this. My point is that there is no necessary connection between the two. Moreover, most college teachers want to teach. Let them do so and be evaluated accordingly.

In *The Idea of a University* Newman argued, conclusively, I think, that what makes for a good teacher is not usually what makes for a good researcher. And vice versa. For one thing a researcher doesn't have to be a performer—or at least he is a different kind of performer. For another, if we are teaching well we aren't likely to have the time to do the kind of research that leads to meaningful publication. To force college teachers into the anxiety-provoking role of a researcher is very damaging to classroom effectiveness, to say nothing of a great waste of valuable time, paper, and library space. We can all relate sad tales of good teachers who were let go because of a poor publishing record. A somewhat pitiful commentary on the profession!

III. *Commit value judgments.* One of the great myths of academia is that of value neutrality. In its basest and most perverse form it holds that ideas stand in an indifferent relationship to action. A more sophisticated version contends that theories and methods can be dealt with independently of their subjective origins in emotion and desire. But the methods and results of inquiry are never neutral in either of these two senses. Or in any other very important sense that I can think of. Part of our teaching responsibility is to show how ideas grow out of value matrixes—out of personal preferences, social circumstances, and historical forces; how they express our choices and intentions, and imply consequences in action.

What is offered as cool, objective, and impersonal knowledge is itself the outcome of value preferences. We hold certain kinds of knowledge and certain methods of inquiry to be true and reliable because of certain desires and needs we have. The irony of the value neutrality claim is that all too often it is insidiously rooted in value preferences of the crassest sort, in values of control and domination and narrow self-interest. We cannot escape subjectivity in teaching. It is an inevitable factor, mandating that we clarify the moral premises and implications of what we teach. Marjorie Grene, among others, has attacked the neutrality thesis by arguing that "our

judgments of fact depend on constitutive judgments of value, not the other way around."

To communicate values is to take education as a serious enterprise of initiating students into a world we consider worthwhile, and that for good and defensible reasons. It is important, very important, not to fall into the pitfalls of moralizing and indoctrination. I suppose it is because education in America was so long in the hands of the clergy that we are so skittish about morality talk and make strenuous efforts to extirpate any trace of it from the curriculum. Still, one must not throw out the baby with the bath water. To communicate values, as I understand that admittedly slippery term, is to educate in light of a cultural ideal. By cultural ideal I mean something like what the Greeks meant by *paideia* and in our day that is a democratic ideal. Democracy, it seems to me, denotes the principal modern contribution to our collective heritages. I would say further that to espouse a democratic ideal is to commit oneself to certain modes of action, to certain values.

It might take some time to spell out all the implications of this claim. For the sake of brevity, let me note three minimal values entailed by the democratic ideal. One is the value of pluralism. At one level, pluralism affirms the legitimacy of varying and often conflicting points of view, a democracy of ideas as it is often put. It favors an empirical temperament and endorses fallibilism. At a deeper level, pluralism rests upon the Kantian notion that persons ought always be treated as ends and not merely means. In other words, it makes an ontological statement about personhood.

A second value is dialogue, or what I would call informed conversation. This is the necessary instrument by which a pluralistic society reaches a workable consensus. But it is more than that. Dialogue is required by the nature of a democratic society itself which is always an evolving entity, always in the process of self-creation. By talking together in intelligent ways we not only unify society; we do more: we create it. The Greeks attached high importance to *logos*—to reasoned conversation—and took it to be the distinguishing mark of our humanity. We are not, they believed, in any significant way human until we can talk humanly. For reasons not entirely different, those who espouse a democratic ideal hold *logos* in equally high esteem. It is the principal means at our disposal for advancing that ideal. As Manfred Stanley has argued recently, the acquisition of dialogic skills is an act of great moral significance not only because it is the instrumentality by which we arm the citizenry with the various competencies a democratic polity requires, but principally because it is the process by which "we create the forms of symbolic life that eventually dominate our collective conscience."

Community, the third value I wish to note here, is a natural outcome of dialogue. The community of language and thought is the foundation of social community. Community, Dewey pointed out, constitutes the idea of democracy itself. It fosters attitudes of cooperation, social agreement, and organic relationships. Community is a word for our shared experience. Dewey put it well. Democracy, he said, "is a name for a life of

free and enriching communion. It had its seer in Walt Whitman. It will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication."

A society that respects pluralism, strives for dialogue and achieves a measure of community may well count as an adequate description of a democratic society. The educator's role in making it possible is an enormous one.

IV. *Be human.* Students rarely see us out of our roles. We all too frequently appear before them as disembodied spirits, like Banquo's ghost, emerging from a shadowy world of books and theories and convoluted academic politics to lecture them briefly on strange ideas that few of them ever really understand and even fewer will ever remember. And then we fade away. Augustine derisively labeled his professors "lip merchants." Some of my students have called me worse.

I have never quite understood why we tend to discount our humanity in teaching. It surely counts for something. We have lived, have known joy and sorrow (and probably poverty), we can lend our words the weight of considerable experience. It is important to share this adult experience with students, who are already in so many damaging ways locked away in their youth ghettos. It has high educative value.

A few years ago an East Coast university introduced a new course taught entirely by persons from different walks of life. They talk about what they do, why they do it, the difficulties they encounter along life's path, and how they feel about a wide range of issues from politics to success. It turned out to be highly popular and of great academic worth as well because it was predicated on the notion that teaching is sharing something worthwhile with students. We tend generally to be too encephalic; we are specialists in head knowledge, moving rigidly on the strings of our research like Cartesian automata.

To teach with our whole persons is to teach best, sharing with students not only the results of the high-powered education we have all received (oddly enough most of us are overeducated for what we do) but as well our social and family experiences, interesting people we have known, good stories we have heard, our travels and hobbies, some seasoned insights into the human condition, something of our hopes and despair. There are, to be sure, limits to what can be done in this direction. We can never close the generation gap and it would be a failure of judgment to try. But it is a time-honored principle of pedagogy going all the way back to Socrates that we teach best by example. We should to some appreciable degree be models of integrated experience and be able to articulate convincing connections between ideas and living.

Part of this mandate is to be mindful of the student's humanity too. There is an old joke about a world-famous scholar who always panicked at the sight of undergraduate students, fearing that they might get in the way of whatever important work he might be engaged in. It isn't that bad in the colleges. Nonetheless we are inclined to adopt an authoritarian and intimidating manner in our dealings with students, to look upon them as mere occasions to wield our expertise, to deliver the truth from on high.



These days there is much plaintive talk in faculty lounges about the woeful ignorance of students, thus obfuscating the real point at issue: to accept them as they are and teach them. Increasingly, faculty affect a world-weary tolerance of students because our positions depend on their presence. The symptoms of student discontent with this predicament are obvious enough: boredom first of all, then apathy and resentment. True, they do not outrightly rebel as they did in the sixties, although they might again. But increasingly they are resorting to the courts and paralegal mechanisms like grievance committees as a defense.

The student's most basic right as a human being is the right to be educated and not merely trained or molded. A great defect of college education is a failure to channel the idealism of the young to suitable ends. They bear deeply in their psyches the impress of a tight academic order that turns them at an early age into time-keepers—measuring out their days by the credit, by the grade, by the semester, in preparation for their assigned functions in the corporate state. How mindless so much of this is! Victims of enfeebled initiation rites, the young in our society are not given adequate outlets for their emotions nor able to dream the large dreams appropriate to their age. The grim seriousness of classroom competition and the chilling impersonalism of college life soon turn student hopes for enduring commitments and meaning into cynical detachment. If we define education fundamentally as a communication between one human being and another, we are then obligated to respond to the natural desire of students to discover an interrelated pattern of values, something to build their lives on.

V. *Step outside departmental boundaries.* It is by no means obvious that the departmental structure is the best delivery system for knowledge at the undergraduate level. But assuming that it is with us for the foreseeable future, we can take steps to increase its effectiveness. Interdisciplinary work is one healthy corrective. I have derived immense benefit from

teamwork with historians, physicists, classicists, and assorted social scientists as well as other humanists. I put it forth as an axiom that very little of lasting significance can be taught in college from a disciplinary perspective alone.

A root problem of the liberal arts is that most of the faculty are not themselves liberally educated. They are not intellectually at home outside of their fields. The solution to this problem is to educate ourselves more broadly. Humanists, to speak for my own tribe, ought to know at least the methodologies and history of the social and natural sciences. One practical way to do this is to take courses from colleagues in the relevant disciplines. Sabbaticals provide an excellent occasion for doing so. A Ph.D. training may focus us narrowly but it has one happy side effect: it makes us good learners. We can soak up enormous amounts of information with much less effort than beginners. A veritable intellectual feast awaits us in other fields—in genetics, in nuclear physics, in experimental psychology (to name a few areas humanists should be especially acquainted with). A liberal arts college is an ideal place for the faculty itself to become liberally educated.

VI. *Step outside academic boundaries.* The relationship between work and liberal education is an urgent and largely unresolved one. Other ages do not seem to have had this problem. Socrates was a stonecutter, equally at ease in the marketplace with the commoners and in the late-night symposia with the ranking intellectuals. Thomas Jefferson wanted students at the University of Virginia to have access to local workshops so they could learn manual skills. Somewhere along the way we have lost that sense of wholeness. Henri Bergson once advised a group of teachers “to act like men of thought and think like men of action” thereby reacting to a perceived problem in our culture.

I believe an experimental approach might be a step towards resolving a dilemma that everywhere bedevils educational planning. If college teachers in sufficient numbers were to gain direct experience in the work worlds, new possibilities of dialogue would open up, more fruitful in connecting theory and practice. As society becomes increasingly splintered, someone is going to have to take the responsibility of building new bridges. There are alliances to forge with unions, with business, with the professions, and so forth. It is a Socratic task of developing a *lingua franca* to enable us to communicate across the interest gaps that necessarily develop in a pluralistic society, a task that falls quite naturally to educators. To do this we must attend closely to the various languages of work and respond intelligently to them. This is surely no small part of what dialogue in today's society must mean.

VII. *Support the institution.* Intellectual work attracts solitary types. Since we work alone so much of the time it is easy to get the impression that we work for ourselves. Our sense of allegiance rarely extends beyond the department—or perhaps the interdepartment—to the institution as a whole. We adopt almost instinctively an adversary posture towards “the administration.”

I see this as yet another instance of the more generalized

social phenomenon of private interests crowding out public ones. What C. B. Macpherson has called “possessive individualism” is a regnant ideology and infects academics as well as others in society. Departmental allegiance is all well and good as far as it goes. But there is a larger issue of institutional loyalty. I am willing to grant that we are over-administered. But the other side of that coin is faculty insularity.

This schizoid situation is not good for a number of reasons. For one thing, it creates artificial and unnecessary tensions that contribute to an illiberal atmosphere. If a liberal arts college is not a *community* of all its constituencies, it soon degenerates into a Hobbesian jungle of class conflict—students against faculty, faculty against administration, minorities against everybody—a kind of perpetual war of all pitted against one another in a tangle of immediate self-interest. Moreover, without a sense of community it is difficult to define institutional goals and even more difficult to attain them—and these after all should have primacy. There is, finally, a very practical argument for institutional loyalty: in these hard times divisiveness threatens the very conditions of our survival. It is a safe prediction that only those colleges with strong institutional identity will survive the dark days ahead.

VIII. *Don't plagiarize.* Academics are not lacking in honesty and integrity. They tend to be generous in acknowledging sources. After all, they invented the footnote.

But there is a subtler kind of plagiarism that goes on all the time. By that I mean an excessive dependency on texts and sources. The difficulty is an inherent one because most of the time we are working with the ideas of others. As Saul Bellow has Herzog say: “The thoughts of geniuses are the canned goods of intellectuals.” The only way to get around this dependency is to work out a principle of appropriation, a way of making the sources our own, stamping them with the seal of our own reflection, beliefs, and commitments. We begin with a text as an actor begins with a script. We learn it first of all, respecting its objectivity, but then go on to assimilate, interpret, and enliven it.

Whitehead has complained that “inert ideas” are the bane of undergraduate teaching. Strictly speaking, there are no inert ideas, only inert ways of handling them. The challenge here is to approach our subject matter from the inside. We must, in existentialist terms, choose our materials not merely in the superficial sense of selecting them but in the deeper sense of making them ours. I suggest that Kierkegaard might serve as an excellent guide in this undertaking. The mode of the apprehension of the truth, he said, is precisely the truth. One need not go that far to appreciate his point and realize that teaching and learning involve a high degree of inwardness and passion, a kind of faith, even and above all a love—a love of the materials used and the subjects taught. Kierkegaard is one of the best pedagogues of modern times because he explored with such sensitivity the mysterious nature of how truth relates to the individual.

IX. *Resist fads.* The American education system is the most reform-minded of any in the world. Some of the reforms are good and betoken a healthy energy and idealism. Many of

them go sour and leave a wide wake of detritus behind them. As a result there is a lot of craziness in higher education, creating a climate in which it is often difficult to distinguish desirable innovation from mere faddism. How many of the educational reforms of the last ten years have been of genuine worth? Or even still exist?

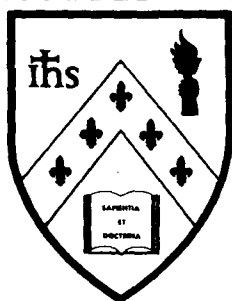
Our reformist impulses should be kept under the tightest control. There is a certain kind of academic who pants after a change as the hart after the fresh waters. And almost every college has at least one administrator, on a bounteous travel allowance, who specializes in the newest thing. It is good advice to be suspicious of reform movements. The important thing to remember is that college years are short. We can't do a great deal and have little time to do it in. It is mandatory to let essentials be our guide in all reform efforts.

In this respect a healthy sense of tradition can be helpful. In the twelfth century John of Salisbury coined the appropriate image. We are, he said, like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants. We can see further than those who preceded us because their labors support our vision. Our social and intellectual heritage has been built up gradually over the ages. Recent parts relate to past parts organically. Ideas are isomorphic. That is to say, each new insight is "grafted" (to use William James's

metaphor) to our stock of old ideas. One element of experience is "married" (James again) to previous elements. Education in this sense is the difficult art of making meaningful connections with the experiences of the race. An old Latin adage applies here: *nihil novetur nisi traditum est*. No innovation without tradition; nothing new without something old; no future without a past. Unless robust traditions guide us, our reform efforts will be clumsy and unenlightened.

X. *Keep your spirits up*. I know that sounds banal but college teaching is often discouraging and always uphill work. Many of us are scandalously underpaid; often bullied by administrators and trustees; held in thinly veiled contempt by the general public; and not always much respected by our students. We swim against a constant current of anti-intellectualism and cultural chaos. Morale is understandably low. Which of us has not thought of changing careers at one time or another? Which of us has not cast envious eyes upon other higher paid professionals like lawyers and doctors and even administrators (just why administrators should be paid more than professors is an interesting question in itself)?

Still, we hang in there. And most of us do so out of conviction, taking pride and satisfaction in the knowledge that we are doing an important and civilizing work.



REFLECTIONS ON A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

Twenty-five years later

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

PERHAPS THE SINGLE most important thing about our class at Fordham, now that I think of it twenty-five years after we have left, is that the Korean War ended the year before we graduated, and thus we were spared—at least in so far as our military obligation was concerned—a necessary emotional linkage between graduation and death. Not that we were then free to chase our careers. ROTC—to which, it seemed, all of us belonged as we tramped around the campus on our Wednesday parades counting cadence against the heckling from the dorms (Carl Candels intoning his Gestapo accent into an amplifier on his windowsill, "Where are your papers? If der saboteurs do not zurrender, der vomen und children vill be shot!")—had saved us from the burden of freedom for another two years.

But then, in 1955, we entered the Artillery or the Air Force (or the CIA or NSA) not perchance to die, but to see Germany or, if the dice rolled against us, Thule, Greenland; to prolong

and test, in another crucible, the process that Fordham had begun—that rite of passage by which we were gradually ripped from the wombs of Catholic Brooklyn, Bayside, Trenton, Jackson Heights, Jersey City, and New Haven and turned loose to compete in the world of Wall Street, law, medicine, and the media which most of our fathers had never cracked but where we might have a fighting chance.

Our generation—"the fifties," "the silent generation"—has not had good press. But I do not recognize it in *Grease* or in the seventies' college students' "fifties parties" where the kids slick back their hair into duck's tails and carry their cigarette packs rolled up in the left sleeve of their T-shirts. Nor do I dare characterize our year with a Tom Wolfean catch phrase of my own—except to say that by the time we graduated history had not yet inflicted its wounds.

I remember, complaining to my roommate the first night in Dealy dorm that the ticking of his clock was keeping me awake and asking him to put it in the desk drawer; Jack Haley Jr., very tall and thin, his red hair accenting his pale face, reporting on his date with Loretta Young's daughter as we jealously mocked and jeered; B. — smashing the mirror behind the bar at the Decatur Bar, coming home running over the roofs and

FATHER RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., formerly associate editor of *Commonweal*, is Academic Dean of Rockhurst College in Missouri.

hoods of parked cars on 193rd Street and crashing through dorm room doors with his fist; Avery Dulles, S.J., attending a Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary beer party downtown at the headquarters of the Associated Catholic Trade Unionists where a liberal activist upperclassman named Bob Moser tried unsuccessfully to goad him into repudiating the “massive retaliation” foreign policy of his father, the secretary of state.

I remember only a few scenes from class: Professor Buford suggesting, to our amazement, that *High Noon* would have been a better movie if Gary Cooper had been killed; our Honors Program seminar making it through a chat with Helene Iswolsky on *War and Peace* with few, if any, of us having read the book; Professor Andrew Myers informing us, after chronicling the disordered lives of all the poets in the syllabus, that Algernon Swinburne was a “masochist,” and my wondering if a disordered life was a prerequisite for being a celebrated writer; the Jesuit ethics teacher, whose brother had played a rapist in a famous movie, being asked if a Catholic actor may licitly play a rapist in a movie and answering, “You may leave the room.”

But the schizophrenic, half-full, half-empty character of Fordham intellectual life in the early 1950s was best symbolized by the struggle of gentle, scholarly, philosophical psychologist Joseph Donceel, S.J., against opposition from within the Society of Jesus on the campus and in Rome, to teach and publish his textbook with the chapters accepting the theory of evolution. To help him make his case, the portly, dry-witted anthropologist Fr. J. Franklin Ewing, the leading disciple of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, used to bring his basket of bones to Donceel’s philosophy class and line up the skulls (one of them named “Egbert”) for us demonstrating, almost a hundred years after Darwin, the marvelous continuity of human evolution. I think we had a sense that something beautifully subversive was going on, that while one part of Fordham was locking the Third Avenue gates to keep out the twentieth century (indeed, the nineteenth!), another part was opening the blinds in the classroom to let in a shaft of secular light.

THE SECOND MOST important thing that happened to our class was the impact of that shaft of light—truly the culturally delayed impact of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment, the celebration of the autonomy of the intellect, the confidence that individual man, once set free from authority and constraint, had within him the intellectual and moral resources to remake his world from scratch. This phenomenon has been labeled “the sixties”; but, while for the larger society this cultural eruption came from the inability of its cultural-moral consensus to keep pace with the acceleration of technological change, for us as Catholics the upheaval came when we finally sat down to eat bread and drink wine with Darwin, Marx, Dewey, and Freud.

Fordham of the 1950s was by no means an intellectual ghetto; and—thanks to a few Jesuits like Donceel, Ewing, J. Quentin Lauer, Joe Frese, Joe Fitzpatrick, and Bob Roth—Darwin, Marx, Dewey, and Freud were not classroom clay pigeons tossed up as “adversaries” to be blithely blasted out

of the air. I still remember wincing at Fort Bliss, Texas, when, in 1955, a visiting Jesuit assured us during a “day of recollection” that as Catholics, we were very fortunate to “have the answers for *everything*.” But even our fifties’ liberal Catholicism—fed by French intellectuals and enthusiasms like Jacques Maritain, François Mauriac, and the worker priests’ movement; by Thomas Merton’s romance of monasticism, and the “harsh and dreadful love” of Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker movement—did not prepare us to live undisturbed with the sixties notion that now *everything* was up for grabs.

To an extent, my own vocation as a Jesuit, though it grew gradually out of my family’s constant but not oppressive devotion, and was warmed up during my encounters with Chartres, Rome, the Benedictine monastery in Bruges, and with a vibrant core of French Catholicism during my junior year in Paris, came into focus in the traumatic contrast between what we learned at Fordham and what the army—and life itself—was teaching us in the first months of Artillery School at Fort Bliss. We were “professional killers.” Religion, politics, values were not proper conversation topics—they only led to disagreements. A date was “going over to ‘Wazoo’ (Juarez, Mexico) to tear off a piece.” (I poured out my revulsion in a letter home and my father, an editorial writer for the *Trenton Times*, who had won a Distinguished Service Cross in World War I, replied gently that I must learn to respect my fellow soldiers on whom my life would depend in battle.)

Yet, my long-term commitment crystallized when, one night, as we toured the bars of Juarez—from our limited experience one of the “worst” cities of the world—where little boys sold their sisters on the street and, away from the gaudy commercial strip of restaurants and souvenir stores, the Mexicans lived in subhuman hovels, Phil Curtin put the question: “If you feel so bad about all this poverty, Ray, why don’t you join the Jesuits where you can do something about it?” How does that sound after twenty-five years—the idea that one would join a religious order to help the poor?

In short, the Fordham-Catholic world view of the 1950s assumed that there were two spheres of existence: the sacred, in which we had been trained and which provided the norms by which the other, the secular, was to be judged. Thus it was inevitable that the central idea of the 1960s, in both scholarly theology and in popular thought, that the “secular” world is supernaturally “graced” from the first moment of creation and thus should be embraced more than fought, came as a blow—even a betrayal—to those among us who had spent a lifetime shining shields and sharpening swords.

To us Leo McLaughlin, S.J. had been the tall, soft-spoken, very quietly charismatic, priest with the warm smile who took over as dean after Thurston Davis, S.J. was suddenly made editor of *America* magazine, replacing the man who was being sacked for attacking Senator Joe McCarthy. When he became president in the 1960s he became—to the readers of the *New York Times* (even a new course in sex education made headlines!)—the personification of the tidal wave of change sweeping through the church. To his friends (and I, like lots of

people, counted myself among them) he was simply forcing Fordham to compete academically with comparable secular universities rather than rest on a pre-Vatican II religious complacency. To his critics he had "sold out" Fordham's Jesuit heritage—taken the crucifixes off the classroom walls—to qualify for state aid. To those who most resented the "pay-any-price-break-any-mold" innovations of his leadership—the radical Ben Salem College experiment, the expensive Marshall McLuhan professorship, the broadening of the transfer of Jesuit controlling power to laymen and women, "freedom" in the dorms etc.—his sudden removal for financial mismanagement, his voluntary exile in a Southern black college, his decision, in his sixties, to leave the Jesuits and marry were further proof that Fordham's and the church's worst mistake had been to neglect the dikes constructed long ago to keep out the flood of change. To those who either shared his vision or loved him in spite of his mistakes, his paradoxical career personified one ambivalent theme of the 1960s which men and women long buttressed by the church's structure did not deal with easily: each of us really is both free and responsible—free to reassess and shift certain commitments, and responsible for the failure to grow as well as for the failure to obey.

THE THIRD MOST important change to affect our generation was the forced redefinition of what it meant to be a good American. In 1954, 101 of us had published a letter that tried to say—after some friendly editing by the administration—that Catholicism and McCarthyism should not be identified in the public mind. As a result, we called down upon our heads months of abuse from the then right-wing Catholic *Brooklyn Tablet*; but we spoke, we thought, from within the mainstream

of American liberal Catholic thought, and in the summer of '55 we dutifully flew off to Fort Bliss or to Germany for two years on the "trip-wire," guarding Rhine River bridges from the Soviet jets and tanks our commanders assured us would come roaring our way that winter.

When I returned to Fordham as a Jesuit priest in 1969 to teach both journalism and history and to finish my George Washington University Ph.D. and a book on the *Brooklyn Eagle*, I found it a healthier intellectual community than ever; and that valuable but sometimes elusive force, "the Jesuit presence," was, in my judgment at least, as free as ever to have its influence felt. But the big difference was the impact of the Vietnam War. The ROTC class of '55 had marched to ready ourselves for Korea. Now hundreds and, on the night of the great Moratorium, thousands of Fordham students marched with the judgment that the country's policy was wrong, even—to use the word once used most commonly in ethics class to denote illicit sexual activity—"immoral."

My first course was on the history of American domestic violence, centering initially on the nineteenth-century Haymarket bombing and the Pullman strike and later touching on race riots and George F. Kennan's essay on student unrest. It attracted an odd mixture of student government leaders and the Progressive Labor party faction of the SDS. Although the radicals and I didn't see eye-to-eye on some fundamental issues, like the heavy work load in my course and the value of non-violence, we had some rapport. At least we could share a Friday night beer with the throngs that packed the El Dorado bar, a run-down old speak-easy with ceiling fans that became, for a few years, a satellite center of Fordham's intellectual life.

Then one day in October 1969 things got ugly. To protest ROTC the SDS and their followers, swept down from a strat-

CLASSROOM COMBAT ARE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS NEXT?

RICHARD T. RYAN

THE RECENT TV documentary, "Combat in the Classroom," presented some chilling statistics. Across the country one out of every ten schools has a serious problem with violence. Approximately 280,000 students are assaulted—every month. Over 110,000 teachers are injured at schools in assaults every year. In Los Angeles one out of every four security agents is injured, and in New York City \$7.5 million is spent annually on school security. If these figures seem staggering, they are nevertheless true, and they are even more ominous because they show no signs of decreasing.

The film examined schools in New York, Ohio, Maryland, and California—all of which it should be noted were

public schools. According to Robert Niemack, one of the authors and producers of "Combat in the Classroom," his research indicated, "There is not a great deal of violence in the private, religious schools." Thus far Catholic schools have remained free from security agents armed with handcuffs, batons, and loaded .38 revolvers. As a Catholic school teacher, I do sometimes wonder why—and how much longer this happy condition will last.

At present Catholic schools operate at approximately one quarter of the cost of public schools, and they often operate in conditions that are far from ideal and with facilities that are in no way comparable. Despite these handicaps they continue to offer a quality education.

It is a well-known fact that *per capita* parochial school students do better on standardized tests than public school students. In surveying the forty-seven inner-city Catholic schools in New York, seventy-eight percent of whose student population come from minority groups, Robert Hoyt

RICHARD T. RYAN teaches at Moore Catholic High School on Staten Island, New York.

egy session in Keating Hall, crossed Edwards' Parade and crashed into the Administration Building, right into President Michael Walsh's office while Walsh was there. The administration withdrew into the north wing and the protesters seized the south wing. They held their wing for a day until, after they had injured a security guard, the police scared them out. In May, the "days of rage" that surrounded the invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Kent State were even uglier. I will always remember looking out my A-House Martyrs' Court dorm window just in time to see a bunch of "Rippies" (too "wild" to call themselves Hippies) tear down the American flag and too late to do anything about it. One of them stood up later at a meeting and said: "The only way we can get them to pay attention around here is to burn down a building!" The next night, as I returned to my room after saying a midnight Mass, the thick, gray air throbbled red. The Campus Center was in flames.

Disoriented by bomb threats, the faculty postponed or canceled some final exams. Although I could have seen closing the school as a moral protest against the Cambodian invasion and Kent State, I didn't like closing shop out of fear. I didn't argue that publicly then and I suppose I should have, whether it would have been well received or not. I guess I was too worn out.

The 1960s died not because the issues that enflamed them were resolved, but because the sixties burned out. The 1969-70 academic year gave a number of us what Shakespeare's Henry V said the soldiers who fought with him at Agincourt would share in their old age—a wound we might someday show our children with pride. But it was a terrible wound of physical and emotional exhaustion—especially for those faculty and administrators who somehow felt obliged to be pres-

ent at the edge of nearly every meeting, protest, late-night rap session, march, and bonfire—partly because we wanted to listen and understand, partly because it was exhilarating to see young people interact politically, partly because we didn't want to wake up the next morning to hear that while we slept someone had been killed.

THROUGHOUT THE PROLONGED crisis, however, Fordham had never come to the equivalent of what, in *The China Syndrome* generation, we have learned to call a "meltdown." Because we never stopped talking, community grew out of conflict.

I think Fordham survived the transition from the late 1960s to the 1970s partly because of its presidents—Mike Walsh, S.J., the healer of the wound, looking tired, but sweet and tough, the Godfather (in the best sense of that word) of Jesuit higher education; James Finlay, S.J., modest, faithful, making both brave and prudent decisions that will shape Fordham's new urban image that must somehow transcend, without detaching itself from, the galloping, pathetic squalor of the Bronx, the garbage and graffiti of Fordham Road.

But it also survived because there had always been a band of friends at its core—Jesuits, lay faculty, and students—who answered calls for help or invitations for a beer in the middle of the night; weren't afraid to sign a "controversial" petition that would cost them a few ounces of their "moderate" image; did all the work on those experimental, interdisciplinary, "values" programs that were one of the few signs in the 1970s, when Fordham and the country as a whole were getting duller, that the school's collective imagination had not withered. I sometimes think it is this kind of heart—when enough of the participants have been touched by the

discovered that, "A comparison of standard test scores reveals that children in Catholic inner-city schools generally score higher on these tests than do children in public schools in the same neighborhoods."

It is untrue that Catholic schools achieve these results, as is sometimes charged, by "creaming," accepting only the best of students and rejecting those from disadvantaged backgrounds. On the other hand, the perpetrators of violence in the public schools are a small minority, whose acts victimize not only individuals but, by creating a climate of fear and absorbing adult energies, damage whole schools. Catholic schools can—and frequently do—expel the few truly violent students. Comparisons with public schools, therefore, should not justify smugness.

There is more to the story than the power of expulsion, however. No doubt, Catholic schools have been able to forestall violence by operating within a firm and explicit moral framework. In addition to teaching students the traditional academic subjects, Catholic schools have been able to be utterly straightforward in instilling in their students distinctions between right and wrong, and elementary

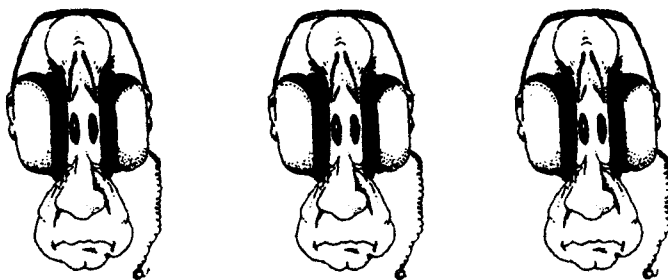
teachings like "Thou shalt not steal." Certainly many public school teachers also try to insist on basic morality, but one of the few discernible differences between public and parochial education—especially significant in an ultra-sophisticated society that often treats moral principles as relative—is the Catholic schools' ability to be authoritative about this morality, and to assume it as a common code, shared by church, school, and parents.

"The key is parental involvement," says Niemack. Certainly parents have long been the backbone of Catholic education. They have given their time, donated their money, and helped in ways too numerous to mention. Now the parental role seems more important than ever. In my years of teaching I have noticed a pronounced change in both my students and in their attitude toward life. The drift toward material values and away from the spiritual realm is the most noticeable. The constantly escalating violence in public schools has not yet contaminated, to any degree, the Catholic system, but it may be only a matter of time. Peer contact, peer pressure will eventually take their toll—or will they?

connection between the Gospel and the intellectual life—that gives Jesuit education its distinctive style.

IF, AS AMERICANS, we are basically embarrassed by the 1970s, by our nation's failure to define itself—in spite of that one glorious day, July 4, 1976, when New Yorkers swam together in a Walt Whitmanesque suntanned sea of gently bumping bodies to sigh for the fireworks and tall ships off the Battery—as Fordhamites we were uneasy too. True, we had given America Charlie Shaffer, John Dean's lawyer. But who knew that? And are those of us who in 1952 were supposed to be impressed by Alan Alda on campus because he was Robert Alda's son supposed to feel better about Fordham because the mind behind M*A*S*H was formed with ours on Rose Hill? Everyone did know that Fordham Law School had brought forth John Mitchell and the College, that madman G. Gordon Liddy, whom some of us must have passed on campus never knowing what he would come to represent, and whose new autobiography, *Will*, praises the Fordham Jesuits (without giving any evidence he ever met one) for all their more fascistic traits.

The cultural historians will probably remember the seventies primarily for the inflationary economy and value system, which seemed to give people a lot of money fast and sucker them into spending it faster—to further inflate a wasteful life style they neither needed nor could sustain. It was probably as



materialistic, self-centered a decade as the nation has seen. Not in the sense of the atheistic "dialectical materialism" they warned us about in our old ethics classes, but in the sheer glut of things that filled dorm rooms, American homes, and the public consciousness—from the stereo amplifiers whose sound could rattle the window panes, to the double plastic packaging on a slice of cheese, to our adoration of King Tut's traveling gold.

The uglier side of the decade's hedonism was the spirit of *Animal House*: vulgarity pushed over the threshold of violence—weekly punch-outs in the neighborhood pubs; a campus strewn with bent beer cans and broken glass; toilet paper rolls strung from the trees; a trash basket turned upside-down over the statue of Orestes Brownson; the kids high on drugs and booze roaring up the dorm stairs at 4:00 AM, turning up the rock, smashing beer bottles through the closed window panes, and shouting obscenities into the night. This anger and destructiveness were more disturbing to me than that of our 1950s classmate who put his fist through the dorm doors, or even that of the 1960s Rippie who tore down the flag. These students' pathology seemed more deeply rooted in a subculture

of despair, of alcoholism and aimlessness that Fordham's curriculum and traditions could not (or did not try hard enough to) penetrate and challenge; a subculture only hinted at in exploitation gang films like *The Warriors* and *The Wanderers* and their jungle vision of the Bronx. And then, too, I was older, more conscious of my own mortality, conscious that I had been in one place for ten whole years and that institutions and persons alike must decide daily which principles to fight for and what price they will pay either to resist or foster change.

I left Fordham the second time, July 3, 1979, in a broken-down U-Haul truck headed for Kansas City, with Neil Grealy, *Ram* editor, as companion. I left partly because as a teacher I was beginning to repeat myself—to tell too many journalism classes in ten years, as we read *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail*, the story of how I met the author, Hunter Thompson, at the Democratic convention in 1968 and how he took me for an FBI man. I began to sense what so many of my classmates—now affluent and successful, married to one wife—must have sensed, that a man, particularly a celibate, must decide to grow and change at forty-five or he may never get that chance again.

But really I left because I had come to believe so strongly in Jesuit education and the intrinsic value of the intellectual life as an unending, disinterested search for truth, that I was open to becoming the dean of Rockhurst, a Jesuit liberal arts college in the "Heart of America."

All this at a time when *Newsweek* editor Kenneth Woodward says that the most neglected news story in the church today is the collapse of Catholic college liberal education. When higher education is entering one of the most difficult periods in its history, when the demographic pool of eighteen-year-olds is drying up and when the survival of any small private college—Catholic or nonsectarian—will depend on the school's ability to maintain high academic standards, adapt its curriculum to meet the needs of a job-oriented generation, market its reputation with an aggressive admissions program, and emphasize each school's *distinctive* character—something that decisively sets it off from the others on the shrinking academic supermarket shelf.

This June I returned to Fordham for my twenty-fifth anniversary reunion, where we drank beer and gazed again into the semi-lined faces of now only half-young men who were once the most important people in our lives; danced with one another's wives to a Glenn Miller-sound band under a gigantic green and white tent; mourned our dead; and admitted truthfully that we loved one another; and that whatever happened on the campus twenty-five years ago had planted a seed that will never die.

Later this summer, in Omaha for another Jesuit's first Mass, I had a few beers with a Fordham student who had switched to Creighton, and who asked what I was trying to accomplish as a dean. I may have told him something about loving books, Bach, and Eakins, about the ability to be entertained by your own thoughts without a TV flickering in your eye or a stereo in

your ear, and about the ability to think through a problem to make a moral judgment. He said I was wasting my time. Because "the future belongs to John Travolta." Not, of course, to Travolta as an individual, but to the culture, swelling inexorably before our eyes like the green blob in a science fiction movie, that Travolta's persona has been created to represent: the unending thump of disco beat, vinyl, neon, fast food, ear-splitting stereo, precocious sex, assertive pseudo-masculinity validated by paying to ride a mechanical bucking bull in front of the gang at the bar.

He may be right; but I'd rather conclude that the power of a hollow, dis-spirited dominant culture is all the more reason for the Fordhams and Rockhursts and Georgetown's to get a renewed sense of how badly they are needed—to preserve what is valid in traditional culture (like medieval monks copying and illuminating manuscripts), and, if necessary, to establish a counter culture (like the French Resistance in World War II or the Apostles in the upper room), all the while making friends with that "shaft of light," open to the men and women of each new generation with whom we can share books, bread, and wine.

Screen

SINGING THE BLUES

HOLLYWOOD'S BIG SPENDERS

AS I WAS pointing out in the last issue, *Airplane!* and *The Blues Brothers* have a lot in common. Behind both is a 1977 film called *Kentucky Fried Movie*, which was dreamed up by three kids from Milwaukee and directed by John Landis, whose only credit until then had been a \$60,000 monster spoof. *Kentucky Fried Movie*'s budget was only ten times that amount, but it was enough to promote the kids from Milwaukee to *Airplane!*, while Landis and his producer, Robert Weiss, worked their way up to *The Blues Brothers*. Not the least of the ways in which these two parody-comedies are alike is that at the peak of the summer season, each was earning roughly the same amount. The one way in which they are not alike, however, is that for *Airplane!* this represents a smashing success, whereas for *The Blues Brothers* it is rather disappointing. The hitch in the comparison between the two films is what they cost to make. Production expenses for *The Blues Brothers* were \$32 million. Those for *Airplane!* were \$3.4 million, almost \$5 million below Paramount's original estimate. There is a moral to this story, if only Hollywood could figure out what it is.

What inspired Universal Pictures to have \$32 million worth of confidence in Landis was his track record. Even his monster flick made several million dollars, and *Kentucky Fried Movie* has grossed around \$45 million. It was his next feature that made him a legend, though. *Animal House*, the fifties frat-

club comedy starring John Belushi and directed by Landis, was made for less than \$3 million, and has earned a whopping \$160 million. Figures like that produce mysticism in Hollywood, so the partnership of Weiss, Landis, and, now, Belushi was given carte blanche on *The Blues Brothers*. The other Brother, Dan Ackroyd, contributed a 400-page script.

Since the sky was the limit, one stunt the filmmakers pulled was to drop a Ford Pinto into downtown Chicago from an altitude of 1400 feet. This was the sort of thing that gave the film its astronomical budget. Stunt co-ordinator Gary McLarty, Hollywood's "King of Crash and Bash," had to drop two test Pintos just to prove to the FAA that no one would be killed. Only when considered in the context of the rest of the film do the expenditures for a scene like this seem normal instead of outrageous. Sixty automobiles were demolished in staging the 300 collisions which occur during the film's frenzy of chase scenes. Five million dollars were spent in Chicago on mayhem alone, and another \$5 million to repair the damage, which included the destruction of an entire shopping mall (damaged merchandise was paid for at wholesale while undamaged was returned). Operating in this high, wide, and handsome style tends to be wasteful. Some of the most spectacular pyrotechnics never even got into the film. When the president of Universal-MCA objected to the original running time of well over two hours, one of the cuts made was of a gas station blowing up. This single shot had cost \$300,000.

The paradox is that the only thing holding *The Blues*

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Brothers back, preventing it from living up to the expectations which all the money spent on it represents, is the money itself. Landis, Ackroyd, and Belushi get quite self-defensive about the film's expense. "The F-14 costs about \$30 million," Belushi quips, "—no laughs there." That's a pretty good line. The lines in the script should have been that good. And I find it hard not to sympathize with Belushi's sarcasm here. No one who's been listening to the debate over the MX missile should begrudge \$30 million spent on a little anarchism. In a country willing to spend limitlessly in order to insure real mass destruction, why quibble about what it costs to rip things up for fun?

The trouble is that I find myself sympathizing with Belushi only in principle, and there are no laughs there, either. In practice, someone with \$32 million to spend wreaking havoc in a movie is almost as intimidating as the Pentagon itself. Stanley Kramer released *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* back in 1965, on the eve of the Vietnam War. That was perhaps the last moment at which Americans could laugh wholeheartedly at such maniacal, unrestrained destructiveness. Since then, Kramer's title has seemed too literally true for a movie like his to be quite as funny. Landis takes the attitude that bigger pratfalls get bigger yuks: "It's things I find funny—that sort of excess. Not two cars going into a thing; forty cars going into a thing." But it turns out that there's a qualitative difference on the screen between two and forty. Two cars are a wise-ass symbolic gesture we can laugh at. Forty cars require some kind of real commitment to destruction. The sheer magnitude takes the edge off its funniness.

I think this is one reason why the film hasn't benefited much from word-of-mouth. People who've seen it haven't found it as funny as they hoped. But it undoubtedly has ways to mitigate a poor showing at the box office. Films with so much riding on them always do these days. One of the *Blues Brothers'* guarantees is the sound-track album. The film is itself a spin-off of the double-platinum album Belushi and Ackroyd have already made with their singing act. To an extent, this guarantee has backfired on the film, for some key reviews were unfavorable because critics were offended at the way these two imitation blues performers used originals like James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and Ray Charles in their movie. James Brown himself doesn't agree. He thinks the movie did him and the other black performers a service. But the fact remains that the *Blue Brothers* are a second-rate version of the singers they imitate.

Like many popularizers in the music business, Belushi and Ackroyd have succeeded phenomenally not by the quality of their music, which is mediocre, but by projecting a more saleable image than the genuine article does. Their only real originality was their outfits: black suits with narrow lapels, narrow-brimmed black fedoras, and shades. Despite the allusion to Roy Orbison, these are the clothes of the straight world, the uniform of an institutional, authoritarian society at the furthest possible remove from the counter-culture of blues singers. Recalling the night Ackroyd and Belushi tried out their act as a warm-up for Steve Martin, *Blues Brothers* manager Bernie Brillstein says that when Ackroyd came out with a

briefcase handcuffed to his wrist, "It was all over." This confusion of R & B with the FBI or CIA is, I suspect, the key to the *Blues Brothers'* appeal. It is the ultimate punk-rock conceit.

It also has to be an in-joke between Ackroyd and Belushi, both of whom came from the kind of strict, conservative Catholic background that produces real FBI and CIA types. One of the more manic scenes in the film, and the one which provides the premise for the whole plot, occurs when the brothers pay a visit to the nun who raised them. This *in-loco-parentis* really is *loco*. The scene has a scary, surreal side to it. We can feel the actual nightmares bubbling beneath the surface. But in general the ambivalence inherent in the *Blue Brothers'* act tends to be problematical when the act is expanded into a story. Yes, the movie is funny; but drawing upon autobiography as Ackroyd's script does, basing itself upon reactions to personal experiences, the movie is also too serious. The jokes are too elaborate and self-important. They have lost that reckless, thrown-away quality which makes *Airplane!* funny. Perhaps this was inevitable. You give someone \$32 million, and he's bound to start taking himself seriously.

As *Airplane!*'s producer, Jon Davison, points out, "Artists, directors are by nature insecure people. And once the press hails some twenty-eight-year-old kid as a genius, he'll get nervous and start spending lots and lots of money." It is not by itself that *The Blues Brothers* is significant, but as part of a trend. It is the third unsuccessful blockbuster in less than a year made by a golden boy touted as a "genius." It's not the public who believes such hype in the press, but the Hollywood executives. Steven Spielberg's *1941*, which also stars Belushi, is such a dud that on his thirty-first birthday friends gave Belushi a button reading, "John Belushi, 1949-1941." Like *The Blues Brothers*, *1941* cost around \$30 million. So did Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. More than half was money Coppola put up himself so that he could keep total control of his film. When you've got that kind of money, you just can't believe that your ideas might be clichés—that seeing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as relevant to Vietnam is something any high-school sophomore might have done in an essay for English class.

It seems that *Apocalypse Now* may at last creep into the black, as may *The Blues Brothers* eventually. But modest profits are not enough to make the high anxiety of the movie business worthwhile to investors. What attracts money to this risky business is the opportunity it offers for almost unlimited greed. It's one of the few places that still does, and that, rather than celebrity, is the glamour on which Hollywood feeds. When the movie companies had their own capital with which to finance their films, the business was not as unstable. Dependent now on other people's dreams of avarice, Hollywood must cater to those dreams with blockbusters that attempt to achieve not just a high rate of return, but an obscene amount of it. Cheap films that score big inevitably lead to expensive films with the same ambitions. So films like *The Blues Brothers* are not solely the fault of twenty-eight-year-old

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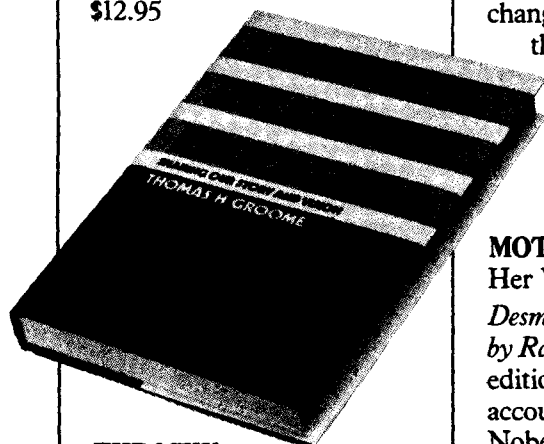
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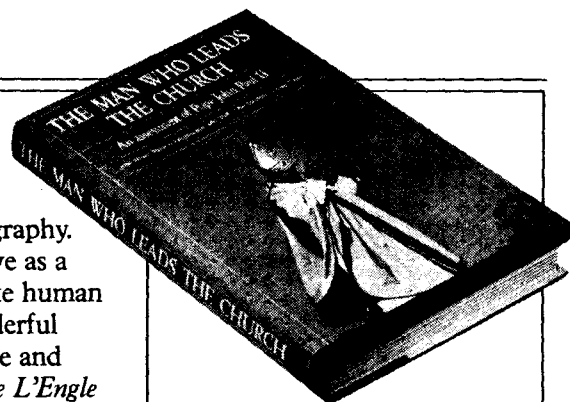
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kids with inflated egos. The kids from Milwaukee who made *Airplane!* may find that they have a tough time resisting a *Blues Brothers* budget on their next project, even if they want to. The entire industry is run on the Peter Principle.

More than ever before, Hollywood's motto is THINK BIG. But that kind of thinking has a Catch-22 built into it now. I said in my last column that there was a message for Hollywood in the relative performances of *Airplane!* and *The Blues Brothers*. Well, this is it. Advertising and distributing a film have become so expensive that they can be justified only by

saturation bookings. A film has to play everywhere at once in order to take sufficient advantage of its promotion. But the consequence is that a film has a very brief life in first-run. This means that while the amount of money that has to be recouped on a blockbuster gets larger and larger, the amount of time each one has to do it in becomes smaller and smaller. Under these conditions films such as *The Blues Brothers* are, like the legendary oogle-oogle bird, in danger of flying up their own rear ends and disappearing. Hollywood itself could disappear with them.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Books: COMPLEXITIES & IRONIES

F LANNERY O'CONNOR (1925-1964) lived, flourished, matured, and died toward the end of the Catholic mini-Renaissance that was already fading by the time of the Second Vatican Council. Catholics and their works and ideas had had the ear of much of the Western world's secular press, partly because of the temper of the times, partly because of the number of talented Catholics working then. This had begun in England, in English, with the Emancipation Act, which within a generation made it possible for Newman and von Hügel to be heard, and allowed the work in England and Ireland of the Ward family. G. K. Chesterton embraced the faith with gusto. In our century Maritain, Mauriac, Bloy, Eric Gill with his Thomistic aesthetic, were considered seriously by the establishment. Sisters wrote theses on the art and faith of Graham Greene and we all loved Ronnie Knox . . . And, as they say, so much more . . . some of it initiated, all of it chronicled in much of the Catholic press, and in particular, in *Commonweal*. It was a period of battles and crusades and a fair share of victories. O'Connor had the problems of any alert Catholic of her period, but she had also courage, a sense of humor, the gift of irony—and talent.

Her late, successful years also overlapped the period of new and intelligent Northern interest in the South. Malcolm Cowley's *Portable Faulkner* made a selection of his works easily available. The Agrarians took their (various) stands. Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora

FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S SOUTH

Robert Coles

Louisiana State, \$14.95, 166 pp.

Margaret Wimsatt

Welty, even Carson McCullers, were read and esteemed far beyond their parish boundaries. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Tobacco Road* were displaced as authentic pictures of life below the Mason-Dixon Line. But in *Mystery and Manners* Flannery O'Connor could still say plaintively: "I have found that anything that comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by the Northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be called realistic."

Around the turn of the decade, as the Civil Rights movement burgeoned, Robert Coles and his wife went South, the psychiatric social scientist, the teacher of English, to Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia. They lived for a while in Cobb County, Georgia, north of Atlanta, and there found themselves turning frequently for illumination on the people among whom they worked to the stories and two short novels of Flannery O'Connor. They met her briefly in the hospital where she was playing out the next to last act of her struggle with lupus erythematosus. Nearly twenty years and many volumes later, Robert Coles was asked by Louisiana State University to give the Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History, and this book is the result.

It is an interesting phenomenon, be-

cause it embodies two opposing views of the South at that period, and of all Southern history and values. The tension between the world view of the Southern girl raised in Savannah, living in a country village, and the Harvard psychiatrist is never quite resolved. Coles is not a doctrinaire social-worker-do-gooder; Flannery was not a racist. They worked along different lines, their paths crossed briefly; that is all. The Coleses were deeply involved in the Civil Rights movement; O'Connor has to the unknowing appeared a bigot. Robert Coles worked with a tape recorder (in this book are recorded passages by a black nurse and a white itinerant preacher), a tool that Flannery's art never needed; she had an ear. She refused to meet James Baldwin in Georgia; in New York City, she thought, it might work; her unexplained objection must have been based on the misinterpretations such a meeting would almost call for. She allowed that Martin Luther King was doing what he had to do, what had to be done. But this was not her province. Nor was she writing about blacks; she understood and respected the elegance and variety of their defenses against overwhelming racism, but in her work they appear as a chorus at the most, more often as parts of the stage set. She is not interested in the pitifully swaggering remains of the antebellum South. Who that has read it can forget the imbecilities of the pseudo-Confederate General Sash in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," or the fatuous efforts of his granddaughter to make the old fraud into a hero for

the benefit of the Daughters of the Confederacy, and her own pride? Flannery O'Connor was interested in the country people around her, in their pride, in their sinfulness, in their less-than heroic virtues, and in themselves always as possible vessels of grace.

Considering the complexities of O'Connor's work, and the peculiarities of the world she presents to a reader (what world could be more foreign to most of mankind?) and considering the bias that Robert Coles might have been expected to bear with him on his journey south, he has written a kindly book. It tells us more about Coles than about

O'Connor. He has read and pondered her fiction. He presents a tidy small list of references to books about her and her work that he has profited from. His insights are serious and thoughtful. Readers will say, rightly: Here is a psychiatrist who can read complicated fiction without Freudianizing the author, and who can admit development in his own point of view. How nice! after the school of Ernest Jones, and the industrious analyzers of Hamlet and Sylvia Plath. If the Lord didn't get around to gifting Robert Coles with a sense of humor, or any comprehension of irony, Flannery O'Connor would be the first to understand.

which is not always apparent. The normal treatment of each topic comprises a review of the material from the Bible, theological development from the Fathers through the Middle Ages and the Reformation to contemporary theologians, including Protestants, and the official statements of the church. Each treatment is concluded by a summary and a synthesis of these materials in contemporary language.

I hope this description of the book makes it clear that a detailed criticism is impossible within 900 words. I know that the generalities which every reviewer has in his cliché box are unfair to a work of this magnitude. But I have to mention that the family name of St. Alphonsus Liguori is consistently misspelled *Ligouri*. I have to ask whether the very brief treatment of angels should not have adverted to some more recent interpretations of the reality of angels. I must ask, simply as a matter of terminology, whether the distinction between faith and belief is valid and illuminating. I am compelled to suppose that only the hazards of publishing deadlines is responsible for the omission in the treatment of the virginal conception of Jesus of the best treatment of the question in English (and possibly in any language), the article by Joseph Fitzmyer in *Theological Studies* in 1978. I find some ambiguity in defining "the powers at work in the world which are hostile to god." There is indeed a "mystery of iniquity," but this mystery is not rendered tolerable by the dualism implicit in a belief in personal demonic beings, a dualism from which McBrien has not clearly extricated himself. And these are really all the nits I have to pick; now to the cliché box.

It is inevitable that McBrien's method will have some shallow spots. I notice them most quickly in his treatment of the Bible. Others will notice them in other areas. I do not suggest that there is no room for a sketchy treatment of some topics which cannot be omitted entirely when the general public is addressed. I have done this too often to repudiate it. It is a risky operation always open to criticism from one's colleagues who will have each his own opinion on some

Historical understanding of theology

CATHOLICISM

Richard P. McBrien

Winston, (2 vols., xcii & ixix & 1186 pp.), \$29.95

John L. McKenzie

RICHARD P. McBRIEN has without doubt produced his *magnum opus*, and I do not thereby mean to imply that he has produced his last major work. But a two-volume compendium of Roman Catholic theology of nearly 1400 pages is major enough to permit him to rest on his laurels or on his oars, whichever way one prefers to think of it. I do not think he is likely to do either; the book to which he has added a significant chapter will never be closed. The reviewer is tempted—at least I am—to compare McBrien's compendium with some of its predecessors. I reject this temptation. I am sure that those who write compendia of theology, like those who write dictionaries of the Bible, hope they are producing something which has not been produced before.

McBrien does answer one of the reviewer's questions at the beginning of the book: why this book? His reasons would serve as a model for much theological writing and deserve to be set forth. Roman Catholic theology has long been dominated by the bitter quarrel between those who accept theological development and those who resist it. McBrien

believes that an effort at healing and reconciliation can be made and should be made. Most Catholics, he believes, sit unhappily amid the turmoil. It is they, and not his fellow-theologians, whom he addresses. He tries to show them that the pre-Vatican I church and the post-Vatican II church have a fundamental unity far deeper than the causes of division. For his purpose he omits the conventional apparatus of erudition and limits himself to suggested readings from theological sources and theological writers. The key to his approach, as he states in the accompanying quotation, is the historical understanding of theology. Readers of this review would be surprised if I did not embrace this approach; they would, I think, be just as surprised if those who resist theological development did not resist this approach as well. There are certain limits to reconciliation imposed by what is or what is thought to be a demand for unconditional surrender.

The work is divided into thirty-one chapters under five headings: human existence, God, Jesus Christ, the church, and Christian existence: ethical and spiritual dimensions. Under these headings the elder theologian can discern the *tractatus dogmatici* of his youth, with some philosophical prolegomena and a discussion of the basic principles of Christian morality. Lengthy appendices quote various ecclesiastical documents and some theological writings, the use of

things which should have been done at greater depth. One can only invite them to do it. McBrien's readers will not be grossly misled. At the risk of some shallow spots the reader will find in one work—not small—an understanding of what is going on in the theological world, and some good guesses of its future directions.

What I wish to say about the theological optimism of the book is addressed not just to McBrien but to the theological world of which he is a competent spokesman. By this optimism I mean a basic acceptance of the world and a belief that the world is an object of salvation. By the world I mean the complex of human achievements by which we believe that human life is enriched. The world includes the price which was paid for these achievements. This optimism is reflected in the general rejection of eschatology by modern theologians. Eschatology is the weakest part of McBrien's book. Optimism is a refusal to accept the reality of sin, death and judgment. Individual persons and even nations and civilizations die, but the world of human achievement, we think, is secure from death. Sin is denied when the

human will for evil is denied. Without a personal devil as a scapegoat or a cop-out (and McBrien keeps him) wickedness is either denied or becomes a human responsibility. When it is denied, judgment becomes an archaic anthropomorphism which comes between us and the vision of God. I simply wonder how close we have come to denying the difference between good and evil. If we are wrong, the price of correcting our error could be very stiff.

This, as I said, is addressed less to McBrien than to his peers in the theological world. It is a *dubium* which should be entered at much greater length, but it would go beyond the task of reviewing McBrien's book. About the book I have more to say than the allotted space permits. There would be points for discussion; this indicates that the book is stimulating. McBrien is best on the church, weakest on God and the Trinity; this reflects the state of theological thought. Let me say finally that my delay in reviewing two volumes of this size was not due to any difficulty in reading the books. If you are interested in theology, I can find at random a dozen contemporaries who are harder to work through.

classical scholar, Mr. Pedigree, a pederast and schoolmaster who lives in and out of jail, who hates the ugly boy and blames him for the untimely death of one of his eleven-year-old paramours, and lust for a pretty shop assistant at the hardware store. Troubled by these distractions from his Bible-reading, and already aware of a power of seeing, he decides to prepare himself for some mission he does not yet understand ("Who am I?" he asked himself, "What am I for?") To escape the "fierce wine of fornication" he hits on a trip to Australia. Now Golding's story becomes deliberately grotesque. In Australia, after various drab adventures he realizes he must go out into the wilderness. He wanders into the out-back and in that desert, at the hands of a cruel "Abo" he endures a non-fatal crucifixion (Golding calls it, uncomically, "a cruci-farce or a crucifiction") and a semi-castration. Purified by these events he now dedicates himself, in a midnight ceremony involving fire and water, a self-baptism, to his mystic task. Throughout these odd chapters the reader becomes aware that St. John's *Revelations* and Ezekiel and his wheels are buzzing about; Isaiah hints a presence, and it is possible that other prophets like Habakkuk, Obadiah and Haggai may be lurking there too. Although most of this story is told with the utmost seriousness not to say solemn portentousness — "he understood the roundness of the earth and the terror of things hung in emptiness" — Golding's curious strategy seems to be to cover his tracks by shifting into irony. We are invited to find a comic element in Matty's predicaments. So Golding switches into Biblese as Matty wanders in the desert: "And Matty came in the evening into the city of Gladstone which is a great city. And he sojourned there for many months at peace," and so on. Or he will slip into contemporary jargon. The young man is lost, hungry and thirsty in the desert: "The literature of survival had passed Matty by."

Golding plays numbers games throughout the book. Matty's provisional "name" in hospital is "number seven," later he is called Septimus; from his Bible he learns that "John writeth his revela-

Manichaeian depressive

DARKNESS VISIBLE

William Golding

Farrar, Straus, Giroux, \$10.95, 265 pp.

Bernard McCabe

DARKNESS VISIBLE's striking opening pages present a small child, horribly burned, horribly disfigured, who walks out of the flames at the height of the London blitz. In the anonymity of a hospital and an orphanage he is partly patched up, given a name at random — Matty — and launched on the "broken business of living" in Golding's world. The fire-bombing and rescue-work and Matty's appearance are described in painstaking realistic detail, but we are also pressed to see the boy as a symbolic and apocalyptic figure. The shattered building he emerges from, for example,

is called "a burning bush," the firemen stare into "two pillars of lighted smoke," the child walks with a "ritual gait," he appears to have been "born from the sheer agony of a burning city."

We now watch as this maimed and fearsome-looking person, semi-literate, utterly deprived of most "normal" human contacts and feelings, gradually develops into a visionary who can "see into a still dimension of otherness" and who can offer his vision to others because he is "near the centre of things." Leaving school early Matty works in a decaying old-fashioned hardware store, itself a symbol of one of the novel's major themes, the accelerating entropy of the modern world. Matty reads his Bible daily, and memorizes it, occupies himself with menial chores, and struggles with his love and lust; love for a decayed

tion to the seven churches of Asia, signified by the seven golden candlesticks''; later still he dances in mystic glee to some music he overhears. It is Beethoven's Seventh. . . . The symbolic nudges come thick and fast in *Darkness Visible*.

As in earlier novels Golding here deliberately shackles himself. He has always gone in for *tours de force*. *Lord of the Flies*' dark tale is told through the sensibilities of eleven-year old boys. In *The Inheritors* he invents a kind of pre-conceptual image-language to initiate Neanderthal mental processes — "I've got a picture," grunts Lok to Fa, *Pincher Martin*'s story is acrobatically told in the last quarter-second of his life, or perhaps in the first quarter-second of his afterlife. In *Darkness Visible* Golding evidently wants to warrant the genuineness of his saint and seer by presenting him in minimal terms. The vehicle of truth is totally unglamorous, frighteningly ugly, rather stupid. A not unfamiliar ploy. But prolonged attention to this figure makes for tedious reading. The shackles are too heavy. And Golding cannot avoid some awkward shifts from the inconsequential detail of daily life to awed awareness of the Ineffable, try as he may. He also cannot avoid some awkward shifts in tone, of the kind mentioned above. He rightly uses some evasion when dealing with mystical matters, "I experienced more than words can say," or a proper vagueness; as when Matty is "near the centre of things." But sometimes he tries to *render* such experiences; "In a convulsion unlike anything he had ever known, Sim stared into the gigantic world of his own palm and saw that it was holy." And there are longer passages of reverent excitement that tell us but cannot show us what's going on, a crucial error. Golding should have heeded T.S. Eliot's brilliant technique of "hints and guesses" at mystical experience in the *Four Quartets*. (That work, *The Waste Land*, and Eliot's verse plays are, I would guess, an overwhelming influence on Golding)

Matty returns to England, to the town he grew up in, now a wasteland of industrialization (Golding calls it *Greenfield*). Here we meet some awful people, awful

without exception: a malicious self-hating bookseller, Goodchild, an ineffectual liberal teacher, Bell, a heartless chess-writer, Stanhope, various unattractive wives and servants, Mr. Pedigree again, creeping about a smelly public urinal on his hunt for delectable small boys, and, the incarnation of evil, two stunningly beautiful twin girls, Sophy and Toni.

In the local and cosmic battle that is now waged between good and evil, darkness and light, Sophy, who has "a dark

tunnel at the back of her head," is (note her name) as wise in fundamentals as Matty. She too is a seer, but a seer who has chosen (or is chosen by?) Evil. Sophy knows and abandons herself to an inner self that "lives and watches without any feelings at all," and has a passionate desire to transcend the placid trivialities of "the daytime world" through some form of outrage and "weirdness". Symbols of darkness surround her as much as symbols of light surround Matty.

She is aware of her power, a power



Biblical Games:

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by Steven J. Brams

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that first comes through violence and then through sex. Her sexual self-initiation (a close echo of Stendhal's *Lamiel*) shows her that sex and power can be one. She moves to sadism, has a near-go at incest, and soon is planning and passionately imaging a combined sexual assault and knifing to death of a kidnapped small boy.

All this high-flown material escapes Golding's control. Matty, whose mission it is to protect that small boy, keeps a journal about his sessions with his tutelary angels that seems, well, simply silly. So do the accounts of Sophy's life in the (hippy, yippy,) punk (or whatever it is currently called) London scene. Golding's glimpses into life among the depraved young, told in "their" language sounds embarrassingly pop-eyed and alarmist, like a busload of tourists peering through the windows at the Village or Haight-Ashbury ten years ago. The sexual encounters go beyond embarrassment, Golding gritting his teeth and getting it over with. And the characters are all stereotypes. Golding cannot persuade that he is interested in them. He simply has not the visionary power that offers us Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich, say, or Saul Bellow's Tommy Wilhelm in *Seize The Day*, tragically disturbing yet ultimately reconciliatory figures. Golding's parable offers characters as unfleshed ideas. And it's never funny.

The novel's oxymoronic title is echoed in Matty's dualistic role as wise fool with two faces, and in the dualities and doublings that abound. The hellish twins, the pair of Bells, the duality that emerges in almost every character's dialogue with an inner self. It is part of Matty's role to bring a unifying vision to his own self and some moments of such a vision to others. Having come from fire he dies in fire, in another apocalyptic scene, but not before he has saved a child's life, presumably thus expiating his early offense against Pedigree, and not before he has afforded a moment of silent vision to Mr. Goodchild and the childish school teacher Mr. Bell. The last section of the book is entitled "One is One." Even Mr. Pedigree is given a moment of unitary awareness. The forces of light have made some ground, then. But it is clear in the

final pages that such achievements have been costly, and are tenuous and precarious.

For Golding has a Manichaean cast of mind, and in such a worldview, although the elect have their moments, and even humble catechumens such as Goodchild and Bell sometimes learn to see, the sub-lunary world is largely the Devil's property, and is passionate in its outrage and cruelty; as Ralph saw at the end of *Lord of the Flies* man's heart is dark: "darkness visible" is of course a phrase from Milton's description of Hell. I shall now risk another guess — that Golding used a Manichaean myth as sustaining framework for *Darkness Visible*, as well as calling on the Old Testament prophets. Goodness, in Manichean terms, is associated with bright light, quickening fire, clear water and cooling wind. Fire and water are Matty's elements, he is bathed in light, and his last name, which keeps changing, (I'm not sure why) is always associated with the wind — Windrave, Windrove, Windrow and so on. The Devil's world is associated with feminine sensuality, heat, and darkness; that is the world of Sophy.

Well, that is as it may be. The Manichaean movement developed as a response to the second century's crying

need for a comprehensible answer to the problem of evil. The problem is certainly still with us, and no one could object to a twentieth century artist feeling a crying need to face it. But Manichaeans do not make good novelists. No matter how many ingenuities are there to project "complexity" of vision, theirs is a simple and programmatic view of life after all. What is more, it is bad for the writer, who perforce must present himself as one of the elect, and bad for the reader, too, who naturally excepts himself from the catechumen's role and wants to join the writer, up there with the elect. And it's uncomfortable being pressed into such priggishness.

Darkness Visible has its undeniable fascinations, and has been greeted with loud applause on both sides of the Atlantic. One dissenting voice was Joyce Carol Oates, who remarked that Golding's fiction is "probably most admired by people who dislike fiction." That is a very good point. Try as I may what I end up with is an impression of a very earnest writer, blessed with remarkable skills and up to all sorts of ingenuities, struggling with a dark vision of man trying to express it through a complex art, making another attempt at another *tour de force*, and getting nowhere.

Skirting the swamp of profundity

STORYTELLING AND MYTHMAKING: IMAGES FROM FILM AND LITERATURE

Frank McConnell

Oxford University, \$13.95, 289 pp.

Steve Lawson

"WHAT A WONDERFUL SIGHT for people who can't read!" enthused G. K. Chesterton when he first saw Times Square. Film critics and analysts have been more or less applying Chesterton's maxim to the narrative sound film and audiences' reactions to it ever since that locomotive scattered the front row three generations ago. For years, a few hardy commentators have sought to trace the parallels and differences between film and its antecedents in literature. But with a very few exceptions

— Stanley Kauffmann, Leo Braudy in *The World in a Frame*, Robert Richardson in *Literature and Film*, the late Charles T. Samuels in *Mastering the Film*—the experts have come off as enthusiastically muddled as the masses.

Now Frank McConnell, a professor of English at Northwestern, has published *Storytelling and Mythmaking*, the central thesis of which is that film recapitulates narrative literature in Western art and the major themes and subjects of literary classics are echoed in contemporary movies. Admirable, intense—and arguable. McConnell no sooner had me on his side in this book than a new ingredient in the debate would promptly alienate my sympathies. Since his style is lucid, his tone calm, and his knowledge of both literature and film history considerable,

these fairly regular partings of company made me nervous, as if one of us had inexplicably wandered off the subject.

Perhaps the explanation comes under "too much of a good thing." For a film historian, McConnell is refreshingly free of movie-buff cant, and his book is devoid of that slightly desperate tone most film books assume when they think they aren't convincing you about this week's masterpiece. For McConnell isn't embarrassed to admit film's literary heritage, and indeed starts off with Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* and its archetypal spring (comedy), summer (romance), autumn (tragedy), and winter (satire), supplementing these with the laws in Rousseau's *Social Contract*. He boils these elements down into what he persuasively sees as the basic storytelling forms—the epic, the romance, the melodrama, and the satire. From this astute yet lively introduction of his premise, McConnell proceeds to apply it to both literary classics and latter-day films, drawing parallels all the way.

He's particularly acute on transitions from one mode to another. I'd never thought much of *Red River*, but McConnell's description of the dissolve which spans twenty years in the film and focuses attention on the pretender (the "knight" of the American West) in the character played by Montgomery Clift rings true, tracing as it does the lateral move from epic to romance. He's good at the telling anecdote, too: John Wayne didn't feel like dying at the end of a film in which he'd starred; instead, Joanne Dru makes peace between him and Clift and domesticity upstages tragedy or melodrama. As McConnell views it, the new ending makes more aesthetic sense, pointing up not so much a revolution in generational conflict but a growth of wisdom and "humanization." Later in the book, he sketches the plot sweeps of the film version of *Lawrence of Arabia* and the hopeless yearnings of the O'Toole Lawrence to live in the Western (British) and Eastern (Arab) skins at once, summing up beautifully:

... The special madness involved in the dialog of those "two selves" is, as the film makes clear, a madness generated by the attempt to

live in the two identities at once... He is forever separated from the purity of the culture he wishes to assimilate himself into by the very imagination—modern, anthropological, self-conscious—which leads him to desire such an assimilation.

There is more in this vein, all sharp, especially in an analysis of the movement of the Romantic hero of old into such disparate roles as the detective and the outlaw in this century.

McConnell's parallels can be equally keen, as in a look at the similarities between Vergil's *Aeneid* and Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*. (Not only are plots similar; both works were commissioned by despotic patrons—Augustus; Stalin). *Ivan* is also compared—more farfetchedly, but cheerfully—to the Marx Brother's *Duck Soup*: the epic versus the satire, both opening with stately inauguration ceremonies in wildly nationalistic countries (Russia; Fredonia). Chaplin's *City Lights* is brought in for some good observations ("Chaplin's greatest discovery as filmmaker and metaphysician," suggests McConnell apropos the recovered blind girl in that film, "was that the cruelest, and therefore potentially funniest, pressure we exercise upon one another is that of seeing each other"), not the least of which is its perceived influence on Allen's *Annie Hall*.

I said "too much of a good thing," and more than once the author's parallels strain credulity. No, a film like *The Longest Day* does not "become almost Homeric," nor does an implied relationship between Gregor Samsa's anguish in *Metamorphosis* and Travis Bickle's madness in *Taxi Driver* convince that Scorsese is on Kafka's wavelength. (Yes, Samsa-as-cockroach can't admit anyone *into* his room, and yes, Bickle can't keep anyone *out* of his cab, but it's still reaching.) And even if one takes the best Hitchcock films like *North by Northwest* seriously, as I do, the "social survival" link between Cary Grant's predicament in that film and the Ververs' marital crisis in James's *The Golden Bowl* overdoes things. Here McConnell loses his footing and starts to sink into the Swamp of Profundity littered with the

bones of those who saw Hitchcock as a modern master of ambiguity, rather than as a brilliant exponent of emotional manipulation and visual rhythm.

Storytelling and Mythmaking, despite such lapses, is full of good points. *Lord of the Rings* was belated allegory, a nostalgic look back at black vs. white battles to the death which only gained great popularity during a gray war like Vietnam. Welles's *Citizen Kane* is seen, rightly, as another installment in a long line of "inheritance novels" like *Bleak House*, *The Red and the Black*, and *Before the Revolution*. Renoir's *Rules of the Game*, suggests McConnell, is a masterpiece of intricacy the pace of which mirrors its own inner agitation—"the machinery is going haywire... too intricately designed for its own original and originating purpose: to make the world habitable." (I only wish McConnell had mentioned the host's frantic appeal to his butler amid the shootings and hysteria at his party's height—"Corneille! Stop this farce!"—and the appropriately-named valet, replying with well-bred sangfroid, "Which one, sir?") And his chapter on satire as "a twice-told tale, repeating as 'farce' what was once told as 'tragedy,'" is especially bright.

Still, there are enough murky areas to make disagreeing with McConnell interesting. I would dispute (violently) his contention that Fellini's liberties with the original Petronius in his film *Satyricon* were "quite in the spirit of the author." And I think he (like most admirers) overelaborates the shift in *The Godfather(s)* from the "human" killings of old Don Corleone to the "cold-blooded" efficiency of son Michael's new regime. It's still murder, folks. Above all, I worried more than once that, for all his intelligence and acumen, McConnell was making the common buff error of confusing a film style (I refer to Ford, Hawks, and their ilk) with a regular set of subjects. Good, vivid dissections of *My Darling Clementine*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, et. al.—but, after all, why?

There are minor errors—*Laura* was made in 1944, not 1941, and the still of *North by Northwest* shows Grand Central Station in New York, not Union Station in Chicago—but these don't obstruct our

relish of *Storytelling and Mythmaking*. One can squabble with McConnell over priorities, but essentially he achieved what he set out to do—to add a worth-

while chapter to the (slowly) developing study of the debts film owes literature and the fascination of the “stories” they share.

A license for speculation

AND THEY TOOK THEMSELVES WIVES

David Bakan

Harper and Row, \$10., 224 pp.

Eugene H. Maly

A QUESTION I often ask my students is whether an atheistic scholar can understand the Bible better than a barely literate Christian. A good discussion usually follows. The scholar has obvious advantages: knowledge of languages, of the history of religions, of archaeology, and especially of all the kinds of criticism that contribute to good exegesis. The Christian has one advantage, the insight of faith, not available to the atheist. The illustration is not a perfect parallel to our case since the author professes no atheism. Neither is the faith element apparent, however. The interpretations he offers are far more dependent on psychological eisegesis than on theological exegesis.

Bakan's basic thesis is that, while proposing an explicit patricentrism, the Bible has many traces, both explicit and implicit, of matrilineal, matrilocal, and matriarchal elements. It may very well be, he argues, that these could be helpful in taking on ourselves anew “the burden of social design” and “fashion appropriate arrangement among ourselves so that we may live.” The greater concern for children, which patrilineality was designed to foster and did, should not lead to a blind imitation of biblical patterns, which can lead to the major sin of idolatry.

It is not this basic thesis with which I necessarily quarrel. It is the manner in which the biblical text is so frequently manipulated in order to arrive at self-serving conclusions. The Genesis passage from which the book's title is taken is a case in point. It deals with the sons of God who “took themselves wives” from

among the daughters of men, a traditionally difficult pericope. Bakan sees it as a key text in the (canonical) development of patrilineality, as it still allows for the continuation of matrilineality through divine impregnation. And the ultimate ascendancy of patrilineality, with its imposition on the father of greater concern for child-rearing and so involving an effeminization of the male, leads to the male's relationship in fidelity to a single God, much as the wife is faithful to the husband. Also, divine impregnation, in the case of Mary, “served the purpose of Christianity, which sought to transcend the particularity of the more limited kinship of the Israelites.” The Greek text of Luke suggests that the angel had sexual intercourse with Mary (p. 131). So, by the stratagem of divine impregnation there are explained the retention of matrilineality along with the introduction of patrilineality, the necessity of monotheism because of the latter, and Christianity's universalism through Mary's virginal (?) conception of Jesus. Even theologoumena are made to cede to psychologoumena. Any serious and believing biblicist would have to challenge the invalidation of obvious theological meanings, intended by the biblical authors as revealed in both text and context, by the use of possible, underlying psychological insights, even while admitting that those insights may “constitute an important part of the cultural context of biblical history.”

Bakan admits that “a license for speculation can also be an invitation for wild or self-serving interpretations.” But he opens himself to that invitation when he states that precisely because the biblical stories are so unreal or inconsequential the reader can “play” with them. If it had been theological rather than psychological “play,” it would at least have been truer to the Bible's overall nature. Hence, my opening question.

Here are just a few illustrations of Bakan's “playing” with the texts. Both circumcision and baptism are substitutes for child killing and so redemptive (p. 19). The order of letters in a text can be changed “to produce new words and new meanings” (p. 64). By interchanging “r” and “d” in Sarah's name, one can read it as meaning “field,” the place where the seed (or “male sexual exudate”) is deposited (p. 76). Later (pp. 122-3) he argues, in line with that interpretation, that Sarah had a visitor in her tent after the promise of a child. Noah, “the major progenitor of all the rest of humankind,” was possibly a female figure (so, matrilineal) before the text was tampered with. This explains the strange reaction to Ham's seeing his father's nakedness (Gen. 9:22); in the original text “Ham took sexual advantage of his mother in her drunken state” (p. 79). In an earlier version of the Lot-Sodom story the sin may have been “a violation of the emerging principle of patrilocality” (p. 99). The Benjamin War (Jdg. 20-21) “may be interpreted as a story of victory over matrilocality” since the women must be moved from

REVIEWERS

MARGARET WIMSATT *lives in New Haven, Connecticut.*

FATHER JOHN L. MCKENZIE, *a distinguished biblical scholar, is the author of several books, most recently, The New Testament Without Illusion (Thomas More Press).*

BERNARD McCABE *teaches in the English department of Tufts University.*

STEVE LAWSON *has written for Horizon, The New Republic and the New York Times. He is a dramatist for the Williamstown Theatre Festival and a producer for the Dick Cavett Show.*

FATHER EUGENE H. MALY *is a member of the faculty of Mt. St. Mary of the West Seminary in Ohio.*

W.S. DI PIERO *is a poet and translator, and teaches at Northwestern.*

FATHER DAVID TOOLAN, S.J., *is assistant editor of Commonweal.*

PHILIP TERZIAN *has written for Commonweal, The New Republic and other journals.*

J.V. LONG, III, *is working on a critical study of Evelyn Waugh.*

elsewhere to Benjamin (p. 100). Circumcision symbolizes both castration and sexual fertility (the glans of the penis is exposed as in an uncircumcised erect penis). Thus the male becomes a "fertile castrate," analogous to the normal female" (pp. 144-5). The "precise moment of the birth of Christianity" is when Jesus "changed his mind" with regard to the Canaanite woman (Mt. 15: 21-28); his mission then became "catholic" (p. 172).

If these interpretations are deemed bizarre, it is not because the psychological insights are all necessarily invalid. Rather, it is because they are proposed as biblical interpretations. If, as biblical faith has it, God really did act in history,

it can be assumed that he would act in accord with basic psychological tendencies. But once he acts, there is a new, theological meaning that can no longer be reduced to a psychological insight. Thus, from a psychological viewpoint the book is rich in fascinating interpretations. From the viewpoint of biblical scholarship it is weak: Bakan is dependent on eclectic secondary sources (especially c. 5); the linking of Paul with Hebrews, with some significant consequences (pp. 136-7), is difficult to imagine in a scholarly book; that only the groom in a Catholic marriage takes the vow is simply not true. From the viewpoint of theological understanding the book is almost completely deficient.

an aloof, knowing tone, the subjects call too much attention to their own (apparent) importance. Poetry seldom inheres in a subject; the poetry lies in the telling of events, not in the events themselves. Masterson obviously places great value on dramatic incident, but he allows plain incident to swamp the deep metaphoric tale which is the real story poetry is meant to tell. The poem, as Masterson treats it, seems more a strategy for avoiding emotion than for confronting its necessities. Let me be clear: I do not question Masterson's sincerity, but I must ask myself whether or not the poem confirms and authorizes sincerity. Too often in this book it does not.

"The Survivors," for example, tells the destiny of an Irish immigrant family. The losses they endure are presented factually, almost as reportage:

The trip to Ward's Island was long,
but he ran
the gravel road to the hospital,
stopping
out of breath at the desk to be told
the third floor office would have
that sort

Shellacked perfection, daylight truth

ON EARTH AS IT IS

Dan Masterson

University of Illinois, \$7.95, 84 pp.

REEDS

Gibbons Ruark

Texas Tech Univ., \$5.95, 57 pp.

W. S. Di Piero

ONE of several populist misconceptions about poetry is that it must be immediately visceral in its intent and appeal, and that it should have obvious designs on the reader. One hears editors speak of how they must be "grabbed" by a first line, a subject, a "voice." One result of this is the proliferation of affectations which are responsible for much of the smugness in contemporary verse. Another result is that young poets often feel compelled to go in search of subjects which because of their strangeness or exoticism will make immediate claims on a reader's (or editor's) attention. Because of this a good deal of American poetry these days consists of realistic anecdote or coy surrealism or stoical melodrama.

I raise these issues because one of the books under review here, Dan Masterson's *On Earth as It Is*, his first collection, suffers from the weaknesses I've

been describing. The subjects of most of Masterson's poems are overwrought, supercharged, newsworthy; murder, suicide, disease, natural disasters—these are his materials, and despite his efforts to cool these torrid subjects by adopting

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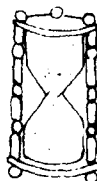
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The poem has a point: Let us pity and praise survivors. This is, to my mind, a rather shallow and complacent theme. But beyond this, the poem is all surfaces; it lacks any deep narrative of estrangement, blind pilgrimage, spiritual dislocation, the fear of an absent god. For all its shellacked perfection of tone and image, the poem finally is merely descriptive. Like many other contemporary writers, Masterson can coin images which at first glance seem brilliant and original, especially images of violence, as in the opening stanza of "The Tower," about the Austin sniper:

He has spent another night
walking through waves of nausea,
balancing the pain behind his eyes
to keep it from falling
through the roof of his mouth
and out onto the rug,
showing itself to be the walnut
he pictures growing
in a fold of his brain.

This, however, is the language of a pot-boiler novel given the arbitrary stanzaic look of poetry. Throughout the book, Masterson's sympathy for his protagonists is unmistakable, and admirable, but disinterestedness is not in itself an act of poetry. And it is never enough for a poet to have a subject, however exciting. He must also, above, all, have a theme.

Gibbons Ruark, in *Reeds* (his second volume), tells personal domestic histories. His subjects are near and ordinary, but his theme—the slipperiness of all that we think we possess—is a vital one. When Ruark is writing well (and there's much good writing here) the sentiments shine forth from the words, but they also invite the reader into the deeper vision of loss and recompense which the poems offer. The verses authorize sincerity, and the poem becomes its own powerful act of will. Here are the opening stanzas from the title poem:

We are beginning one more time
this evening,
Leaving our daughters and letting
our lives
Uneasily down the hillside, leaning
ing
Northward, where the moon means
nothing to the heavens

Of stone that lie there starlit when
the moon is gone.

What impresses me most about Ruark's poems is his ability to combine intensity of sentiment with ease of execution, something I associate with James Wright's poetry. Every line counts for much. His use of traditional verse forms—his tercets are especially nimble and swift—explains in part the finer discipline of thought found in his poems. It is easy (and often convenient) to conventionalize the abyss and sink oneself into its complacencies, to take comfort from loss because it's such dependable poetic material (and because it's the one thing we are certain never to lose). Ruark carefully avoids the banality of loss:

Write down dry veins, the hug
Of pain in every kiss.
Soon any catalogue
Of woe must come to this:
My body breaking down
Beside your body
Till one of us is gone
And the sheets are bloody,
And I am your lover
Taken by the darkness
Or a blank light forever
Where your lovely head was.

When the poetry sags in *Reeds*, it does so from an overload of sentiment, a *formless* spilling over of feeling. In a few poems, most conspicuously in "In this Light," the sentiment tyrannizes the verse and the result is a vague crepuscular impression instead of a vivid daylight truth.

Reeds may not receive the notice claimed by books from trade publishers and the large university presses. But it is surely better than most of the dull, fussy, academic poetry produced by the Pittsburgh, Wesleyan, and Yale series. Ruark is unafraid of feeling; more crucially, he is unafraid to discipline and formalize feeling. He writes a poetry of experience, to be sure, but a poetry that is also deepened, made historical, by remembered innocence.

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

Authority in the eye of the beholder

AUTHORITY

Richard Sennett

Knopf, \$10, 206 pp.

David Toolan

AFTER FREUD, it has become harder to believe Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor was entirely wrong in his estimate of humankind. Since psychoanalytic revelation, moreover, it has been the mark of honesty and courage among intellectuals of the Left when they take seriously the old cardinal's thesis that men willingly welcome unfreedom. One such honest and courageous intellectual of this stamp is surely Richard Sennett. His latest book, the first of four projected on "the emotional bonds of modern society," was inspired, he tells us, by meditating on the ambiguities of Dostoevsky's parable.

"The dilemma of authority in our

time," he writes, "the peculiar fear it inspires, is that we feel attracted to strong figures we do not believe legitimate." Our social cement is collective disaffection—and little over a year ago Jimmy Carter thought that was more serious than OPEC. According to Sennett's reading, this "culture of negation" is the fall-out of the modern market economy, which like Mother Nature is perilous to touch and when it fails no one is responsible. Employees of such an impersonal order defend themselves against shameful weakness by declaring their masters illegitimate.

Max Weber, the sociologist's authority on authority, would be puzzled—for he assumed legitimacy was necessary for voluntary obedience. Freud would just smile knowingly—infantile and aggressive wishes. Sennett intends his book to fill a gap here. Freud's analysis leaves the reasonable rebel in the lurch, nor does he explain the magnetism of authority for

the mature. Neither Freudian nor Weberian analysis shows the *process* whereby authority, malign or benign, is "felt into being," nor why there are such variances from one person to another in the experience of it. Sennett wants to understand how and why the interpretation of authority changes, undergoes transfiguration—and finally, how, by dealing at close quarters with power, men and women incorporate the strength with which they deal.

The essay is an appeal for the use of imagination in politics, and itself an exemplary exercise in that use. The general interest reader is not put off by social science jargon, but invited to reflect, as Sennett reflects, on a series of illuminating examples of how people—in the home, factory, and office—become hamstrung by, or free from, a negating fear of authority. Sennett's method of reflection on telling examples lies in the great humanist tradition; he offers us various "norms," ways of being, to choose from. He is not afflicted with galloping Gallup pollism. As much as his method

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will delight and inform the general reader, it will disturb those professional peers of his who keep telling us, with the aid of survey data digested by infallible computers, what we mostly already know—and who inform us of impersonal trends, not one whit about what matters. Sennett's reflections, his wit, matter. So much for method.

For Sennett, the possibility of changing malignant forms of institutionalized authority—say those forms which dominate modern life, the “false love” of paternalism (“Submit, and I will take care of you”), or the “without love” autonomy of bureaucratic experts (“You need me, I don’t need you”)—lies in the fact that authority dwells, to a degree, in the eye of the beholder. Or, the mote in authority’s eye cannot be removed till we unfix the beam in our own. And that beam is a fixated imagination, typically stuck on a frozen, disillusioning metaphor like paternalism’s false fusion of boss and father. Sennett’s originality here is that he does not believe, as both tough-minded conservatives and revolutionaries often do, that the problem is solved by abandoning poetic imagination. Rather, he claims, it is the work of imagination to see through the pretense of authority to omnipotence and

infallibility—and to demand of the socially constructed world that power be nurturing and restrained.

“The only answer to the Grand Inquisitor,” he insists, “is imagining a response outside his terms.” But negation, the reactive posture of rejection, lies within those terms. The hard truth is we cannot disbelieve in authority without at the same time discrediting our own strength and the will to demonstrate it.

As Sennett sees it, the contemporary legitimacy crisis, at least in the industrialized West, lies less with malign authority than with the malignancy in our relation to authority. And though he offers little comfort to Harvard Business School, his hardest sayings are reserved for the central delusion of Enlightenment and revolutionary legacies: that disbelief in authority will bring freedom. With examples from the psychiatric couch, the Pullman strike of 1894, “unhappy consciousness” in the accountant’s office and the anti-war movement, he exposes the social pathologies offered as freedom by the politics of negation. Part One of Sennett’s book practices a “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Ricoeur) on the revolutionary tradition. Part Two is constructive, a “hermeneutic of restoration,” wherein Sennett helps us understand how legitimate bonds to authority come to be.

“I began to wonder how the rhythms of authority in intimate life might serve as a response to the illusions of authority and their negation in public life.” The trick in the second half of the book is to make the translation from private to public life without expecting the latter to mirror the former. Sennett’s idea is that relations to authority within the private familial world exhibit movement—growth, decay, transcendence. His point is to see whether some of that movement can be transferred—at least indirectly—into the more static, inflexible world of public institutions. So we are treated to Madeleine Gide “purging” herself of her brilliant husband’s spell, or Franz Kafka reversing roles with his father and thus reimagining the relationship of father-son. The section on Kafka ought to be mandatory reading for all partisans of Liberation Theology. The “preferen-

tial option” for the poor, the “victim as hero” idea, gets a good shaking here.

For the author of *The Fall of Public Man*, this last section of the book represents something of a course correction. For in that previous work, Sennett had given a good drubbing to the self-aggrandizing politics of the consciousness movement. But here he is in the current book plundering the territory of California lotus-eaters with close study of the (at first) inner work by which social relations are redefined in intimate life—a work of imagination. I suppose this may be his call to the consciousness movement to take more seriously, that is, politically, its findings.

Sennett’s own application of these findings to the public order, recorded in his final chapter, are salted with a dose of anarchism. Some of them, like suggesting open discussion of the range and latitude within commands, are as obvious as they are rare in modern organizations. Others, like the use of the active voice in orders (as opposed to the impersonal “it has been decided . . .”) and open discussion of the need for nurturance, are disarmingly simple—and unlikely to charm ITT or GM. (But perhaps that’s a lack of imagination on my part.)

There are few, however, who will dispute the principles he advances, that authority be “visible” and “legible.” It must be visible in the sense that, if subjects are to sense the limits of authority and acquire the ability to negotiate with it as less than omnipotent, authorities must be clear about what they can and cannot promise and do. And legible—subjects must be able to read, make sense of, what power means. Sennett’s specific proposals, intended to make these principles operational, seem to me an initial, very unfinished illustration of the fruitfulness of his method of approach rather than a statement of political program. Perhaps, after all, any political program, socialist or whatever, smacks too much to him of the utopian illusion, the promise of a lasting city “solid like the stones of a church”—some ‘thing’ to replace the ongoing struggle to be free. Our world is transfigurable, and we must work hard at it—but no, no lasting city here. Does that sound familiar?

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In Brief

EDWARD VII: PRINCE AND KING, by Giles St. Aubyn, Atheneum, \$19.95, 481 pp.

Edward VII has enjoyed an interesting revival lately, helped along by a popular BBC series. Queen Victoria's eldest son was long thought to be a kind of disgraceful successor to his awesome mother, a fat rake who combined debauchery with an indifference to his duties.

The truth is very different, as this excellent political biography shows. Edward was the victim of his parent's stolid determination to turn him into a 19th century Renaissance man, and, in a perfectly understandable reaction to their monstrous regimen, he never became an intellectual. But he did become a brilliant prince. His mother arbitrarily cut him off from affairs of state practically until he became king at the age of fifty-nine, but he had by then become an institution in his own right: a leader of fashion and Society, but, more important, a confidant of politicians, both right and left, and probably Europe's leading authority in foreign affairs. When he ascended the throne in 1901, he was well prepared to encourage those diplomatic steps that led to the *Entente Cordiale*, and enabled Britain to resist German militarism.

His personality is curiously appealing to us today. Kindly to a fault, he seems to have been completely without racial and religious prejudice, a remarkable feat in his times, and was a greater, if less regal, figure of royalty than his mother. This biography, although emphasizing Edward's political life (based, as it is, on the papers of his longtime private secretary), nonetheless admirably conveys the temperamental difference between the Victorian and Edwardian eras. When Edward and his son served as pallbearers at Gladstone's funeral, "The Queen, incensed that her son and grandson should pay homage to a mere subject, telegraphed to discover what advice had been sought and what precedents followed. The Prince of Wales replied with terse simplicity that he had sought no advice and knew of no precedents. There was but one Gladstone."

There was, it would seem, but one Edward, and this is a brilliant and illuminating biography.

PHILIP TERZIAN

ROUNDS, by Frederick Busch, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$9.95, 244 pp.

This is a Creative Writer's novel: self-consciously clever and important, vaguely pretentious, and not very interesting. Frederick Busch winds his story through the lives of two fragile marriages. Eli Silver is a pediatrician in upstate New York estranged from his wife who fled in the aftermath of an automobile accident that killed their son. Phil and Annie Sorenson have restored a number of run-down homes near the colleges which have hired Phil to make remedial students "eligible to enter college within a year of their having entered college." Annie has miscarried several times, and the old houses seem to be the only offspring her marriage can produce.

The map of the novel is scored with types—eccentric, but not terribly fascinating academics who have found (what passes for) identity and protection behind the ivied walls of a small college. The pregnancy of an unmarried psychologist at Sorenson's school provides the connection between the doctor who cares for children, but has lost his own, and the couple who would be parents, if they were only able to.

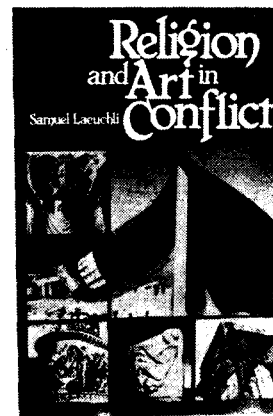
There is an impressive, sustained attention to medical detail in this book. And it tries to be a story about both medical and emotional healing, about recognizing how we inflict wounds upon each other *because* we are mortal. There is simply too much fancy stitching. The first third of the book, for example, alternates between the past and present tenses as it focuses on the Sorensens and Eli Silver respectively. Silver won't acknowledge his immediate past and confront the shadow of his son's death. The device, and it is annoying rather than significant, shields him from his memory.

The author attracts attention to himself; his characters seem like marionettes not like human beings. It is difficult to care either for them or for the book.

J. V. LONG III

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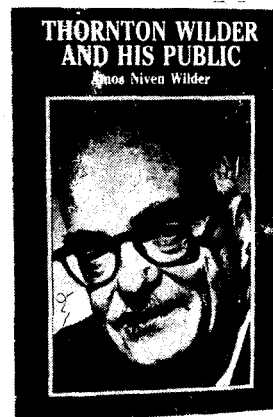
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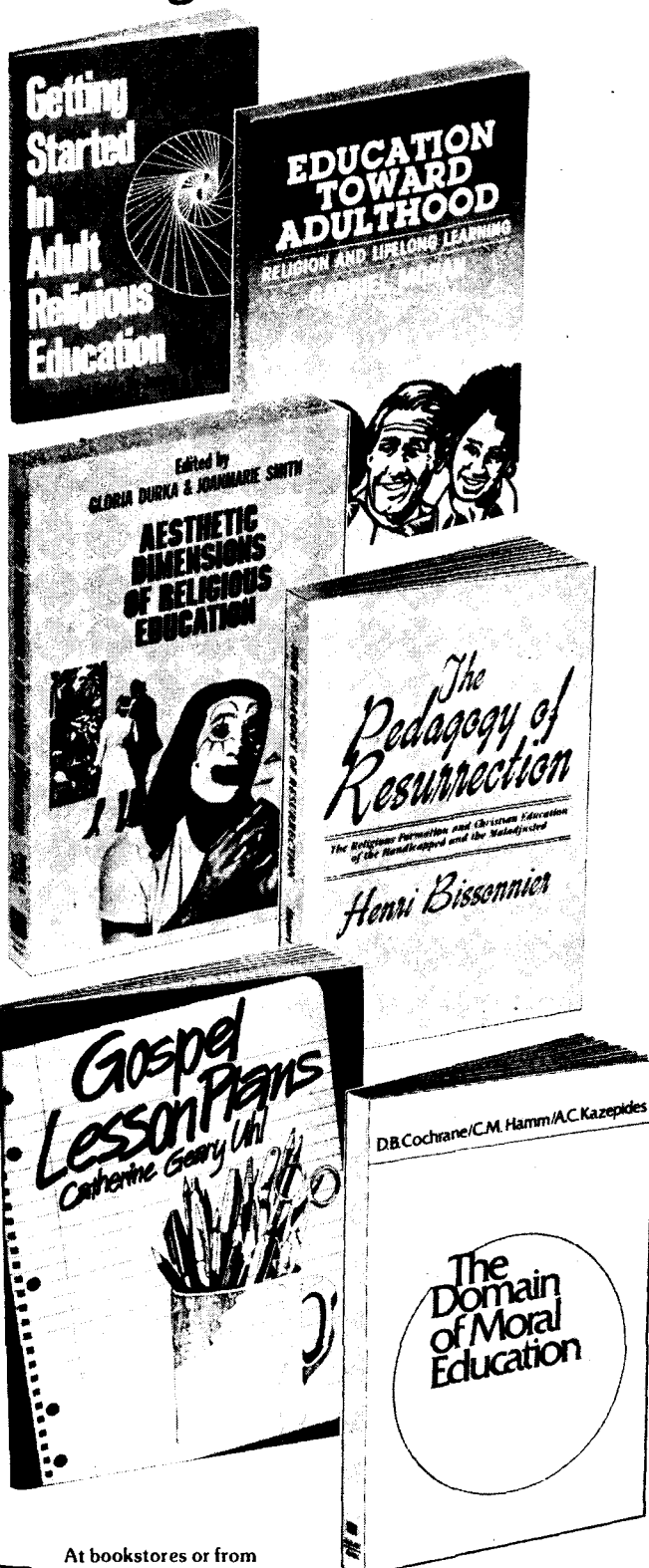
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